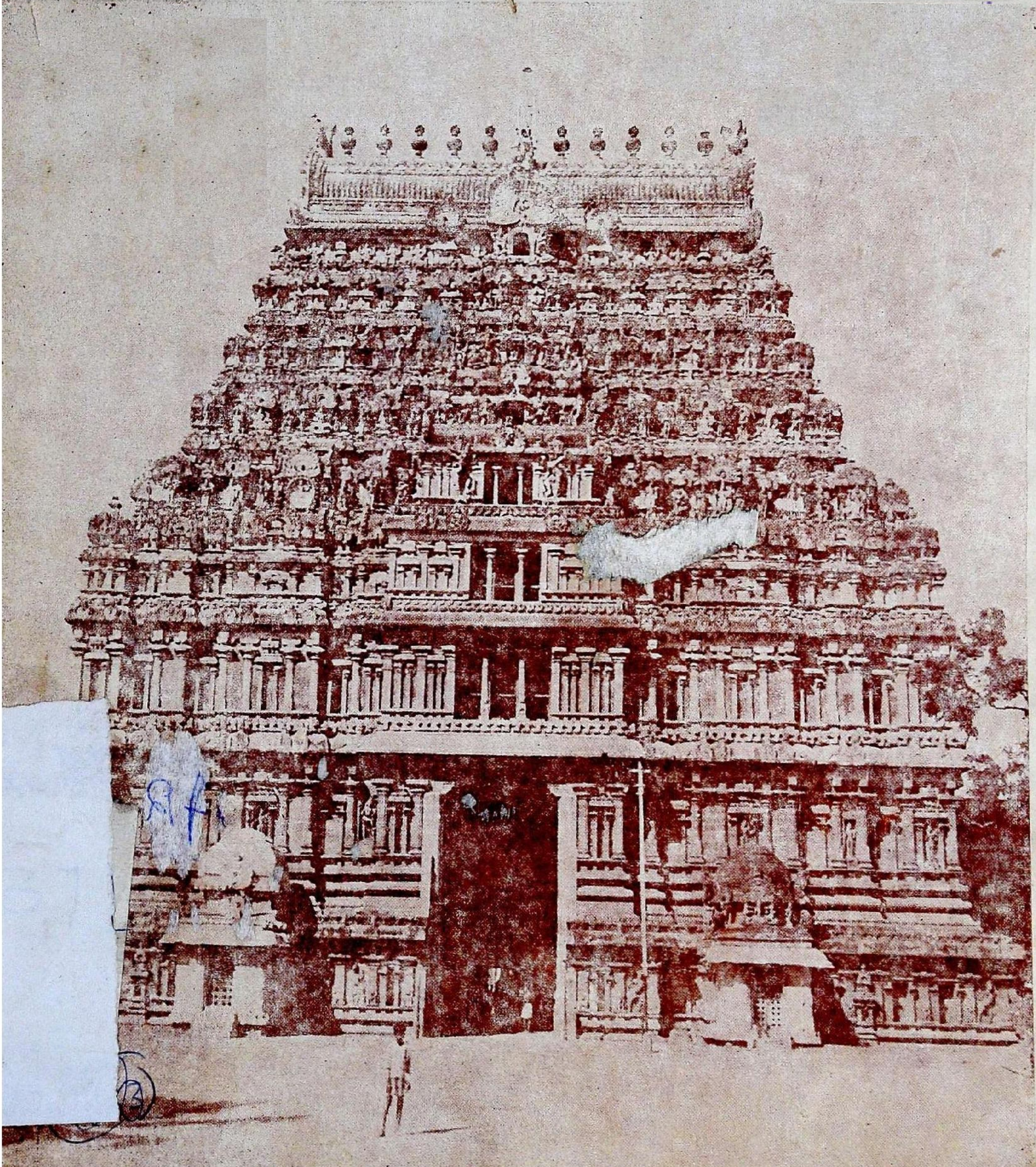
Sri Thyagaraja Temple

Thiruvarur



Sri Thyagaraja Temple
Thiruvarur

BY

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PREFACE

The following pages embody the results of my research work as U.G.C. Research Scholar in the Department of Ancient History and Archæology, University of Madras, between September 1964 and March 1967, on "The Tyagārajaswami Temple-A Study" for the M. Litt. Degree of the University of Madras.

I am grateful to the Commissioner, The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Board, Madras for granting permission to take photographs of the sculptures and architectural features of the temple. The Board of Trustees for the internal administration of the temple have not only permitted me to prepare ground plans of the various structures within the temple but also helped me providing necessary facilities. The Tamilnadu State Department of Archæology have kindly provided fifteen photographs for purpose of illustration.

I am under deep deligation to my Professor and Supervisor Dr. T. V. Mahalingam, M.A., D. Litt., Professor of Ancient History and Archæology in the University who not only suggested the topic for my research but also guided my work throughout. The work was made possible by the grant of the Post-Graduate Research Scholarship by the University Grants Commission. The University authorities have also kindly accorded permission for publishing the work. My thanks are also due to the Government Epigraphist for India, Mysore for having permitted me to refer to the unpublished inscriptions.

I am grateful to the Director of Archæology, Government of Tamilnadu for having brought out this work as a Departmental publication and also for having arranged for its excellent printing in the Departmental press.

S. PONNUSAMY

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INTRODUCTORY

The temple in South India is perhaps the only ancient religious institution that has retained its importance and popularity down through the ages. Patronised by royalty and the public, it has preserved age-old traditions around it and fostered arts of different kinds in a remarkably noble way. Most temples contain valuable inscriptions that serve as the most authentic source for reconstructing the ancient history of the land. During the medieval period, the South Indian temple was the hub of the socio-religious life of the people and served as the centre of the activities of the village community. It played also considerable role in the economic activity of the people and the fostering of administrative institutions. Hence the importance of the study of the temples of South India, which offer valuable and useful data for an understanding of the main currents of the political-,religious-, art-, social-, and economic history of South India.

The Tyāgarājasvāmi temple at Tiruvārūr is one of the most ancient and biggest temples in South India. It is rich in traditions and many legends of much religious significance have grown round it. It preserves many inscriptions on its walls, dating from the period of the imperial Chōḷas to that of the Mahrāṭṭa rulers of Tanjāvūr. The temple-complex with many additions and renovations of centuries within, provides a rich field for the study of South Indian architecture through its many shrines, *maṇṭapas* and *gōpuras*. It has a good number of stone sculptures and bronzes.

The temple has a unique place in the history of Śaivism in South India and is associated with the names of Saints like Ñānasambandar, Appar and Sundarar who have sung its praise. Besides, some other important Nāyanmārs were also closely connected with the place and temple. It continues to be a temple of great popularity, with large properties. Festivals on a grand scale are being conducted regularly. The Tiruvārūr temple is one of the few living South Indian temples with a rich past.

The scope of the study covers the temple in all its aspects; its origin and growth; legends, traditions and symbolism peculiar to it; religious movements connected with or centering round it; literature relating to it; its services to society; its art and architecture; and its administration through the ages.

The main sources for a study of the temple are the stone inscriptions and copper plates found in it. A few inscriptions found in some other temples in the Tamil country also contain references to the Tiruvārūr temple, and are utilised here wherever necessary. Besides, references relating to the legends connected with the place are found in Tamil literary works like the *Śilappadikāram* and the *Maṇimēkalai*. Medieval works of secular nature like the *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* and *Rājarājaśōḻanulā* also refer to some of the legends unique to Tiruvārūr.

Of the works of a religious nature, the *Tēvāram* hymns, and the *Periyapurāṇam* form indispensable sources for reconstructing the religious history of the temple and the place; references found in collections like the *Tiruvāśagam* and works like the *Tiruvārūr Mummaṇikkōvai, Tiruvārūrulā* and *Kandapurāṇam* are also useful.

Among the score of works that were written during 16th – 18th centuries concerning the deity and the place, the *Tiruvārūr Purāṇam* and *Tiruvārūrkkōvai*, are important as they depict the symbolic significance of the Tyāgarāja concept as it developed during contemporary periods.

Chiefly receiving its glory through its temple, the town of Tiruvārūr, of which a few words are necessary here, seems to have been a city of considerable importance, since the period of the rise of the imperial Chōḷas of the Vijayālaya line. It was held in importance by the Chōla kings till the first half of the eleventh century, during which period the capital was transferred from Tañjāvūr to Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram and royal visits were thereafter more frequent to the Chidambaram temple. [1] The town in recent times has acquired the distinction of being the birth place of the great composer–devotee, Tyāgarāja as also for its association with the lives of the other two great composers in Karnatic music, Muttusvāmi Dīkshitar and Śyāmā Śāstri.

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1. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas*, p. 345.

Tiruvārūr is now a municipality, situated in the Nāgappaṭṭinam taluk of the Tañjāvūr district. The railroad junction bearing the name of the town, situated two miles south of the temple, lies eighteen miles west of Nāgappaṭṭinam on the Southern Railway. With a population of about 29,000, the town's major industrial preoccupation is mechanised hulling of paddy, through its numerous rice-mills. The making of minor iron-ware articles and toys forms one of the minor industries engaging a number of people. The town, dotted with and surrounded by rich paddy-fields, retains more of the rural flavour, a chief trait of the towns of this deltaic region. Ōḍambōkki, the river that girdles the town, is one of the numerous branches of the Kāvērī that water the Tañjāvūr delta.

The main deity of the temple is named Tyāgarāja, after whom the temple-complex and the temple administration are known. However, the shrine of Valmīkanātha, along with that of Tyāgarāja forms the double-shrine that is situated in the centre, forming the nucleus of a staggering area of about nineteen acres, housing numerous shrines and many *manṭapas* in three spacious *prākāras*. In the second *prākāra* on the four corners are situated clockwise from the south-east corner, other important shrines of the temple-complex *viz.*, the Achalēśvaram, Āṭakēśvaram, Ānandēśvaram and Siddhīśvaram. Other important structures include the Nīlōtpalāmbāḷ shrine in the second *prākāra* and that of Kamalāmbāḷ in the third. Of the important *manṭapas*, the Dēvāśriyan *manṭapam* and the Sabhāpati *manṭapam* are found in the third *prākāra*. The Rājanārāyaṇan tirumaṇṭapam is situated in the second *prākāra*. There are also numerous little shrines containing *lingas* and many small *manṭapas*, in the three *prākāras*.

Before taking up the particular study of the temple, the role played by South Indian temple as an institution in the history of the land, may be briefly considered here. The origin of the temple as a specific centre of an organised faith is difficult to trace. But it may be suggested that places of prehistoric cults such as those of tree-worship and ophiolatry provided the nuclei for the later growth of temples based on well-developed religious beliefs. However, among the present South Indian temples, the more ancient, popular and sacred ones seem to be those, which were associated with the names of the three foremost Nāyanārs, Ñānasambandar, Tirunāvukkaraśar and Sundaramūrti, and again around which there were legends of religious importance.

The importance of the temple as a place of worship and a symbol of popular religious faith apart, its development as the centre of village activity during the medieval days is remarkable in its own way. Two reasons may be adduced for such growth: strong religious bias in the organisation of the Hindu society which vested the temple with obligations of more than a religious nature and rural autonomy in which the temple played a large part.

Inscriptions found on the walls of temples and copper-plates preserved there, or elsewhere, mainly relate to grants by kings and people made for worship and services to deities. From the records many other facts relating to the society, helpful in reconstructing the pattern of life in those days, are available.

The temple had its own managing committee though there are also instances of its being administered by the village assembly. [1] Generally the village assembly had the local temple as the place for conducting its business. [2] Rules and regulations relating to the formation and composition of village committees are found inscribed on temple walls. [3] Negotiations between assemblies of two villages were often held in the temple precincts. Village assemblies, even where they were not directly connected with the administration of the temples, retained the duty of supervising the grants made to the latter.

The social functions of the temple were many-sided. It made provision for the recital of divine hymns and for the study of the *śāstras* in its hallowed cloisters, and patronised philosophic movements. [4] Schools are also found to have been run by the temple, with prescribed syllabi. [5] Dance and dramatic performances were held in its *maṇṭapas*. [6] Large temples had scores of musicians and dancing girls in their service. [7] Other fine arts like sculpture and painting owed much of their growth to the temple, as is evident from the numerous monumental remains found in the land.

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1. *A.R.E.*, 1922, Part II, pp. 116-7.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Uttiramerur. 1 and 2 of 1898.
4. Kumbakonam. 233 of 1911.
5. Ennayiram. 335 of 1917.
6. Tiruvidaimarudur. 157 of 1895; *S.I.I.*, Vol. V, No. 721.
7. Tanjavur. *S.I.I.*, Vol. II, No. 66.

The temple bought and sold lands and kept strict accounts of its assets and liabilities, and had its own treasury and record office.[9] It employed besides the priests and artisans, many servants, their qualifications, duties and wages being specifically fixed.[10] It advanced loans to individuals and merchant guilds for interest.[11] Hospitals and dispensaries are found to have been maintained by the temples,[12] and provision was also made for feeding pilgrims and monks sumptuously at the temples.[13]

Thus the temple was a good institution which patronised and encouraged in the varied aspects of the activities of the village community. Its contribution to the success of local autonomy was also in no way small. Essentially agrarian in nature, the medieval village community could not have found a better place for developing its social life.

The Tiruvārūr temple throughout its history maintained supremacy not only over the society in the local *kūṟṟam* but also over the surrounding villages, their assemblies and temples. It is a typical example amply representing the qualities and achievements of the medieval South Indian temple, as an institution profoundly affecting the contemporary religious, political and social life of the people.

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9. Tiruvallam. 208 of 1921.
10. R. Nagaswamy, 'South Indian Temple - As an Employer', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. II, No. 4.
11. *A.R.E.*, 1922, Part II, p. 117.
12. Tirumukkudal. 182 of 1915.
13. 155 of 1919; *S.I.I.*, XIII, No. 284.

TIRUVARUR
IN THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF SOUTH INDIA

Any well developed and organised religion has a history, symbolism, mysticism and philosophy, as its main components. Its history, commences from the hoary antiquity of the faith, beginning with mythological accounts, miracles and traditions. Symbolism is the *sine qua non* of a religion, however unostentatious its rituals may be, for it is the popular means of conveying the highest divine truths to ordinary men. Mysticism brings the ultimate truth to the level of human perception, actually experienced and revealed by a gifted few, with all the gloom and glee, characteristic of human life. And philosophy comprises the whole rational of a faith. trying to understand the relationship among the Universe, Man and God, on its intellectual side, and to establish a moral code among its followers on its ethical side. As a lively emblem of a living faith, the Tiruvārūr temple offers a rich field, to study all the above ingredients, under its massive roof. While the unique but fruitful developments that made the South Indian temple a socio-religious centre during the medieval days are considered elsewhere, here an attempt is made to bring out the religious significance of the temple, *vis a vis* the norms of a faith mentioned above.

Like all ancient temples of South India, especially of Tamilnadu, tree worship lends the basis for the later growth of organised beliefs, at Tiruvārūr also. The *sthala vrksa* (the holy tree peculiar to a temple) is the *Pātiri*, the trumpet–flower tree (*Bignonia chelonoides*). Again *puṛṛu*, (ant–hill) takes the place of the *liṅga* in the main shrine, *viz.*, Valmīkanāthēśvara.

Thus the principles and practice of tree–worship and ophiolatry are the ancient pre–Vedic bases whereupon at a later date, the *liṅga* worship was established. Almost all the temples have their holy trees but clear evidences of ophiolatry are available only in a few places. It will be both interesting and useful to consider ophiolatry in some detail here, so as to bring out the antiquity of Tiruvārūr, as a religious centre.

Apart from the primitive trends traceable in the religious beliefs of a young civilization, elements representing the bounty of nature can be found in the tree–worship, and dread and reverence for super human or non–human forces are detectable in ophiolatry. Both forms of worship are closely inter-related, for many snakes like to establish themselves in the roots of trees, especially, in those of huge and old ones. Ophiolatry in South India is purely pre–Vedic.[1] Though found scattered in few references, evidences for the practice of ophiolatry, are not altogether wanting in the Śaṅgam literature. In the *Perumbā-ṇāṟṟuppaḍai*, one of the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, it is described that offerings were made to the snakes which were living under a *Maruda* tree.[2] Again, that snakes were held in awe and reverence, is borne out by the *Malaipaḍukaḍām*.[3]

The legend that is connected with Valmīkanātha at Tiruvārūr, is both interesting and illuminating in this connection. It is said that Vishṇu, proud of the possession of a great bow, chased the Dēvas, round the worlds, and on their prayer to Śiva, his strength and pride vanished as he reached Tiruvārūr. And while he rested his head on his bow and stood dismayed, the Dēvas, in the form of white-ants, built an ant-hill at one end of the bow and cut its string; Vishṇu's head was cut off from his body by the straightening bow and he fell dead. However, Śiva restored Vishṇu to life and accepting the Dēva's wish he took the ant-hill as his abode here, changing from that of Āṭakēśvaram which was nearby.

Āṭakēśvaram is a *bilam* or a subterranean apartment. Even now, south of the main shrine, in the second *prākāra*, near the *sthala-vṛksa*, there is a separate shrine known as Āṭakēśvaram, where there is no deity but a subterranean passage traceable to six or seven feet

1. G. Subramania Pillai, *Tree-worship and Ophiolatry*, pp. 100-1; also T. V. Mahalingam, 'Nagas in Indian History and Culture', *JIH*, XLIII, pp. 45 and 56.
2. *"Pamburai marudin ongucinai nilal, Paliperu viyan kalam maliya verri"-Perumbanarruppadai, ll.232-3.*
3. *"karandu pambodungum payambumarulave kurikkondu marangotti nokkichcheritodi viraliyar kaitolu-uppalicca varidu neri yori-i valan-cheyak kalimin"-Malaipadukadam, ll.199-202.*
4. *Tiruvarur Puranam*, vv. 153-62.

towards the north, and closed by a slab of stone. It can be deduced without doubt that the ancient memory of the worship of snake, and of its abode, the ant-hill, and the subsequent introduction and crystallisation of *linga* worship here, are strongly suggested by this legend. There are also other instances of ant-hill worship blending with later organised beliefs as at Tiruvoṟṟiyūr in the Chingleput District and Tiruveṟumbūr in the Tiruchirappalli District.

Unfortunately, two other important legends connected with Tiruvārūr are not of much significance like the one connected with Valmīkanātha, for, unlike the latter which suggests principles, the former bring in personalities : Muchukunda and Manunīti. Muchukunda, as the story goes, was originally a monkey living on the Kailāsa mountain, who, even as a lesser primate, pleased Śiva, through his devotion and was consequently blessed to be born as a Chōḷa king on earth. His valour on earth preceded his Herculean exploits in the abode of the Dēvas, where be saw the backs of fleeting Asuras, who were a menace to Indra. The grateful king of the Devas, presented the Tyāgarāja idol to the Chōḷa king, who installed the image in a separate shrine, by the side of Valmīkanātha, in his rich capital, Tiruvārūr. This great king connot be identified easily with any Chōḷa monarch of the Śangam period, or with any one of the Vijayālaya line. However, as a Chōla king, his achievements are narrated by way of legendary recapitulation by the *Śilappadikāram*, *Maṇimēkalai* [5] and *Rājarājaśōḷanulā*. [6] Parenthetically it may be mentioned here that his subduing the Asuras, being presented with the Tyāgarāja image by Indra, and his installing the deity by the side of Valmīkanātha, are found painted on the ceiling of the Dēvāśriyan *maṇṭapam*, in the third *prākāra* of the temple. The paintings are assignable to late Vijayanagar period. In these paintings he is depicted with the face of a monkey,

5. *"Kaduvisai avunar kanangondu indikkoduvari ukkattuk konagar katta todukalal mannarkut tolaindanaragi nenchirul kura nigarttumel vittivancham peyartta maperum putam"*-*Silappadikaram*, VI, 11.7-11 ; Also, XXIX, Ammanaivari ; *Manimekalai*, XXII, *11*. 210 ff.
6. *"vinnadu kattu Muchukundan minda nal mannadu kanda madandalyarum" Rajarajasolanula*, v. 70.

and it is remarkable that the same monkey-faced Muchukunda, is portrayed as a devotee of Śiva in the Vijayanagar paintings at the distant Lepākshi temple.[7]

Manunīti Chōḷa, another monarch of this mighty Sun's race, became famous in a different but equally noble sphere like the valorous Muchukunda. Once his son, the crown-prince, accidentally ran his chariot over a calf and killed it in a street of Tiruvārūr, the capital of Manunīti. The bereaved cow mother, rang the bell of justice at the palace entrance and Manu, informed of the accident ordered his minister to drive the chariot over his son, as a punishment and thereby dispensed justice. When the helpless minister committed suicide, unable to carry out the king's order, Manunīti himself drove the chariot over his son. Moved by his sense of justice, Śiva appeared in the firmament and revived all the dead, including the calf.

Again, the *Śilappadikāram* refers to the noble courage of this king, but the lines convey an air of mystery to the incident, as they do not say that the incident had taken place at Tiruvārūr; he is referred to only as an ancestor of the Chōḷas of Puhār.[8] It is only in the *Periyapurāṇam*, that the incident is specifically localised at Tiruvārūr.[9] But a quasi-historical value is attributed to the legend by an inscription dated in the 5th regnal year of Vikrama Chōḷa (A. D. 1118–1135) and found on the south wall of the second *prākāra*[10] of the temple. The record narrates the legend and gives the names of the prince and Manu's minister, respectively as Priyavrattan and Pālaiyūr Uḍaiyān Ubayakulāmalan, by way of granting a piece of land to Chandrasēkharan Ādiviṭankan of Pālaiyūr, a descendant of the illustrious minister of Manu. However, the inscription does not establish the historicity of the legend, as the period in which Manu lived is not referred to. Further legendary colour is given to

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7. C. Sivaramamurti, "Vijayanagara Paintings from the temple at Lepakshi", *Vijayanagara Sex Centenary Commemoration Volume*, pp. 84-85. According to legends Muchukunda's name is also associated with the temple at Tiruvorriyur.
8. வாயிற் கடைமணி நடுநா நடுங்க
ஆவின் கடைமணி உகுநீர் நெஞ்சு சுடத் தான்தன்
அரும்பெறற் புதல்வனை ஆழியின் மடித்தோன்
பெரும்பெயர்ப் புகாரென் பதியே . . . . சிலப்பதிகாரம், XX, 11.52-5.
9. பெரியபுராணம், திருநகரச்சிறப்பு, vv. 13-49.
10. 163 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, Vol. V, No. 455.

the incident by the *Mahāvamśa* which freely attributes this rare deed of compassion and justice to Ēlāra, a Ceylonese King. [11]

These two legends connected with Muchukunda and Manunīti, not only enrich the mythological significance of Tiruvārūr, having been firmly localised here, respectively through the popularity of Tyāgarāja and the narration by the *Periypurāṇam,* but also lend the suggestion plausible that the ancestors of the Chōḷa kings, ruled over this area which is situated deep inside the Chōḷa territory proper. This suggestion is further strengthened by the fact that Muchukunda is counted as the thirteenth of the Chōḷa kings in the genealogical list furnished by the Kanyākumari inscription of Vīrarājēndradēva. [12] The *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* claims Manu (he who drove his chariot over his own son) and Muchukunda as the early ancestors in the Chōḷa line, providing them respectively with the eighth and eleventh successions. [13]

Tiruvārūr and its temple, as all other religious centres and institutions, have assumed fresh significance and value, along the course of time. So, numerous stories, symbolic of the divine merit, were added from time to time, to the most ancient local legends and the references found in early literature. Thus Tiruvārūr is called as a *pṛthvī sthala* (earth), of the five important *sthalas,* representing the five basic elements; goddess Lakshmi did penance here for the sake of reviving her husband Vishṇu, who lost his life due to conceit; [14] and it is deemed that those who are born at Tiruvārūr will attain *mukti,* and will never take birth again. [15]

A score of other legends and divine sports of Tyāgarāja, like those of the Lord of Madurai, are described in the *Tiruvārūr Purāṇam,* assignable to the latter half of the 16th century, written by Maṛaiñāna Sambandar. [15a] They enhance the divine dimensions of the temple and

11. *Mahavamsa*, XXI, 15-18.
12. *E.I.*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, pp. 26-30.
13. கலிங்கத்துப்பரணி, vv. 187 and 189.
14. . . . . , மலர்மென் பாவை
முழுதுள திருவும் என்றும் முடிவில் மங்கலமுமெய்த
விழுமிதி நோற்றுப் பெற்ற வியன் திருவாரூர்;
-- கந்தபுராணம், குமராபுரிப்படலம், v. 81.
15. பிறந்தவர் பிறவாப்பெரும்பதி - கல்லாடம், 52;
முக்தியங்குதித்தோரெய்தும் பதியது -- திருவிளையாடற்புராணம், அர்ச்சனைப்-
[படலம், v. 17.
15a. The work is known as *Kamalalayachchirappu ennum Tiruvarur Puranam.* Date of the work is given by the author himself as S. 1464 (A.D. 1542). Payirachchirappu, v. 25.

add to the spiritual aroma of the place which is already brimming with enough significance.

The Bhakti movement connected with the temple forms an important phase than the one represented by the legends and traditions connected with the place and the temple. It forms part of a larger movement that covered the whole of the Tamil land, heralded by the advent of the authors of the *Tēvāram*. These saints, Tiruñānasambandar, Tirunāvukkaraśar and Sundaramūrti, were the timely products of an era, covered roughly by two centuries, which witnessed a silent but fervent revolution, that elbowed out the heterodox systems like those of Buddhism and Jainism. They visited the numerous temples that dot the Tamil country and sang the *Tēvāram* hymns, well known both for their lyric grandeur and mystic excellence, celebrating the various attributes and divine deeds of Śiva. Thus they revitalised the faith, by giving almost a new shape to it. Tiruñānasambandar and Appar (Tirunāvukkaraśar) belonged to the seventh century A.D. and Sundaramūrti's date is almost by common consent placed in the eighth century. All the three have sung in praise of the main deity of Tiruvārūr and Achalēśvara, whose shrine is situated in the second *prākāra*, has been sung only by Appar. Ñānasambandar has composed five *padigams* on Tiruvārūr, while the contributions of Appar and Sundarar are twentyone and eight *padigams* respectively.[16]

As much a versatile poet as a mystic, Ñānasambandar uses sound diction and choice metres to sing the praise of Ārūran, as he endearingly calls the main deity of Tiruvārūr. His first *padigam* here consists of *Tiruvirukkukkuraḷ* (short couplets).[17] In them he entreats the people to offer flowers to the Lord of Ārūr, so as to get eternal bliss as well as happiness on earth. In another *padigam* he lists the divine deeds of Śiva such as burning the triple-fort, dancing at the cremation ground and plucking one of Brahmā's heads.[18] He also says that Śiva has Alliyangōdai, on the left side of his body.[19] It is significant that

16. தேவாரம்.
சம்பந்தர் - 1 : 95 & 105; 2 : 79 & 101; 3 : 45.
அப்பர் - 4 : 4-6, 20, 21, 52, 53, 101 & 102; 5 : 6, 7, 24-32 & 34.
சுந்தரர் - 7 : 8, 37, 39, 51, 59, 73, 83 & 95.

17. சம்பந்தர் 1 : 91.

18. சம்பந்தர் 1 : 105.

19. அல்லியங்கோதை தன்னை யாகத்தமர்ந்தருளி யாரூப்
புல்லிய புண்ணியனைத் தொழுவாரும் புண்ணியரே -- சம்பந்தர் 1 : 105 : 9.

Alliyangōdai (Nīlōtpalāmbāḷ) is the name of the Dēvi here, whose shrine is situated in the second *prākāra*.

The mystic-poet also plays the beloved in another *padigam* and longs for union with Śiva who is besmeared with the holy ash and who has crushed the impertinent strength of the ten-headed Rāvaṇa. [20] He also brings out the beautiful natural setting amidst which the city of Tiruvārūr is situated and describes the tall structures of the city, which by their flags nudge the Sun; [21] Tiruvārūr is also filled with heavenly music and dance performed by the beautiful maidens of the city. [22]

The mystic, who narrates the feats of Śiva amidst the pleasant setting of Ārūr in melodiously sweet verses, however, strikes a harder note in the tenth verse of each *padigam*, closing in on the heterodox systems, Jainism and Buddhism with no soft words; [23] again every ninth verse is reserved to deal with the Vaisṇavas, though the attack is not so strong as compared with that directed against their unfortunate counterparts on the extreme opposite side, leaving enough to feel the punch, the superiority of Śiva over Vishṇu and Brahmā, [24] being emphatically stressed upon.

Humility and devotion form the keynote of Appar's hymns, and naturally the Tiruvārūr temple-complex, with its many shrines and age-old traditions and legends has given ample scope for the expression of his pious zeal, through elegantly mellow hymns. In describing the deeds of

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20. சம்பந்தர், 3 : 45.
21. கருக்கொள் சோலை சூழநீடு மாடமாளிகைக்கொடி
அருக்கன் மண்டலத்தாளவும் அந்தண் ஆரூரென்பதே; --சம்பந்தர், 2 : 101 : 1.
22. கெண்டை கொண்டலர்ந்த கண்ணினார்கள் கீதவோசை போய்
அண்டரண்ட மூடறுக்கும் அந்தண் ஆரூரென்பதே;
நிரைத்த மாளிகைத் திருவின் நேரனார்கள் வெண்ணகை
அரத்த வாய் மடந்தைமார்கள் ஆரூர் என்பதே; --சம்பந்தர், vv. 2 and 8.
23. பறித்த வெண்டலைக்கடுப் படுத்த மேனியார் தவம்
வெறித்த வேடன் வேலை நஞ்சமுண்ட கண்டன் மேவுமூர்; --சம்பந்தர், v. 10.
மாசு மெய்யினர் வண் துவராடை கொள்
காசை போர்க்கும் கலதிகள் சொற்கொளேல்; --சம்பந்தர், 3 : 45 : 10.
24. துள்ளும் இருவர்க்கும், வள்ளலாரூரை
உள்ளும் அவர்தம்மேல், விள்ளும் வினைதானே --சம்பந்தர், 1 : 91 : 9.
இருந்தவன் கிடந்தவன் இடந்துவிண் பரந்துமேய்
வருந்தியும் அளப்பொணாத வானவன் மகிழ்ந்தவூர் --சம்பந்தர், 1 : 102 : 9.

Śiva, his method differs from that of Ñānasambandar; while the former gives out the full iconographic setting, the latter narrates them as incidents.

Appar sings the glory of Śiva, whom he calls as Ārūranār and Tirumūlaṭṭānar in most of the hymns, by praising the Lord's various aspects, as brought out by his deeds: Gajasamhāramūrti,[25] Gaṅgādhara,[26] Bhiksāṭana,[27] Liṅgōdbhava,[28] and Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti.[29] These themes occur again and again, but each time woven into a new emotional matrix, and a passionate appeal to surrender oneself to Śiva underlies and connects all the hymns.[30]

References are also found in Appar's *padigams,* throwing light on legends, symbolism, festivals and certain names peculiar to the deities connected with the Tiruvārūr temple. In one of the hymns, he addresses the main deity as Puṟṟidaṅgoṇḍān (one who resides in ant-hill).[31] He refers to the legend relating to Āṭakēśvaram, the subterranean apartment, wherein Śiva is said to have resided, before taking the ant-hill as his

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25. வம்புநற் கொன்றையினானும் வாட்கண்ணி வாட்டமதெய்த
அம்பரவீருரியானும் ஆரூர் அமர்ந்தவம்மானே -- அப்பர், 4 : 4 : 4.

26. குழற்கங்கை யானையுள்வைத்துக் கோலச் சடைக்கரந்தானும் -- அப்பர், v. 7.

27. பக்கமே பாரிடங்கள் சூழப் படுதலையில்
புக்கலூர்ப் பிச்சையேற்றுண்டு பொலிவுடைத்தாய்க்
கொக்கிறகின் தூவல் கொடியெடுத்த கோவணத்தோடு
அக்கணிந்த வம்மானை நான்கண்ட தாரூரே -- அப்பர், 4 : 19 : 2.

28. நாடினார் கமலம் மலரயனோடு இரணியன் ஆகங்கீண்டவன்
நாடிக் காண மாட்டாத் தழலாய நம்பானை -- அப்பர், 4 : 20 : 10.

29. தடக்கை நாலைந்துங்கொண்டு தடவரை தன்னைப்பற்றி
எடுத்தவன் பேர்க்கவோடி இரிந்தன பூதமெல்லாம்
முடித்தலை பத்துந்தோளும் முறிதர விறையேயூன்றி
அடர்த்தருள் செய்ததென்னே ஆரூர்மூலட்டனீரே -- அப்பர், 4 : 52 : 10.

30. தேன்கமழ் சோலைத்தென்னாரூர்த் திருமூலட்டானன் செய்ய
பூங்கழலானடித் தொண்டர்க்குத் தொண்டராம் புண்ணியமே - அப்பர் 4 : 101 : 6.
எந்த மாதவம் செய்தனை நெஞ்சமே
பந்தம் வீடவையாய பராபரன்
அந்தமில் புகழ் ஆரூர் அரனெறி
சிந்தையுள்ளும் சிரத்துளும் தங்கவே; -- அப்பர் 5 : 7 : 2.

31. புற்றிடங்கொண்டான்றன் தொண்டர்க்குத் தொண்டராம்
புண்ணியமே -- சம்பந்தர் 4 : 101 : 6.

abode.[32] Again the earliest reference to the name Vīdiviṭankan is found only in a hymn of Appar,[33] and it is interesting that in the Chōḷa inscriptions found in the temple, the deity is known only by that name.[34] The titles, *Dēvarakaṇḍan* and *Āḍaravakkiṇkiṇippādattān*, which are, *inter alia* attributed to Tyāgarāja, by later works like *Tiruvārūrkkōvai*, are also mentioned by this saint.[35]

Appar mentions two festivals that are celebrated even to-day in the temple on a grand scale, viz. *Tiruvādirai* (Mārkaḷi) and *Uttiram* of Panguni.[36] He earmarks a whole *padigam*, to describe the *Tiruvādirai* festival during which the deity is carried around the main streets of the city, and the people take part in it in all joyous enthusiasm and worship the deity. It may also be stated here that during the Chōḷa period (twelfth century) large provisions were made to celebrate these two festivals in the temple, as evidenced by an inscription.[37]

That there were various religious sects flourishing at Tiruvārūr, is attested by one of his hymns, which *inter alia* refers to the Pāśupatas and Kāpālikas, the extreme Śaiva sects; they are said to have frequented the streets of the city.[38]

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32. நீள்வான முகடதனைத் தாங்கி நின்ற நெடுந்தூணைப்
பாதாளக்கருவை ஆரூர்
ஆள்வானைக் கடுகச்சென்று அடைவேன் -- அப்பர், 6:27:9
திருவாரூர்புராணம், ஆடகேஸ்வர சருக்கம்.

33. பவனி வீதிவிடங்கனைக் கண்டிவள் தவனி யாயின வாறென்றன் தையலே
-- அப்பர் தேவாரம், 5:7:8

34. 164 of 1894; 537 and 561 of 1904; 670, 676 and 680 of 1919.

35. ஆடரவக் கிண்கிணிக் காலன்னுஞேர் சேடனை
ஆடுந்திக் கூத்தனை நான் கண்டதாரூரே -- அப்பர்தேவாரம், 4:19:10
தண்டவாளியைத் தக்கன் தன்வேள்வியைச் செண்டதாடிய தேவரகண்டனை
-- அப்பர் தேவாரம், 5:7:7
திருவாரூர்க்கோவை, vv 63 and 193.

36. அப்பர் தேவாரம், 4:21
ஆராய்ந்து அடித்தொண்டராணிப் பொன்ஆரூரகத்தடக்கிப்
பாரூர் பரிப்பத்தம் பங்குனி உத்திரம் பாற்படுத்தான்- அப்பர் தேவாரம், 4:102:2

37. 269 of 1901; S. I. I., vol VII, No. 485

38. . . . . உருத்திரப் பல்கணத்தார்
விரிசடை விரதிகள் அந்தணர் சைவர் பாசுபதர் கபாலிகள்
தெருவினில் பொலியும் திருவாரூர் அம்மானே.
-- அப்பர் தேவாரம், 4:20:3

Appar, who was originally a Jaina and became a Śaiva through the grace of Śiva, provides an autobiographical touch through a *padigam*, in which he flings a leaf from the book of his unhappy memories, catechising himself for not having sought the feet of Ārūran earlier.[39] He compares himself to a hunter who pursued a crow, overlooking a hare; one who preferred raw stuff to a fruit; and with one that tried to make a doll out of water.[40] Thus he is penitent for once having adhered to Jainism, instead of being a devotee of Siva.[41]

While Ñānasambandar's verses exhibit militant zeal, and the hymns of Appar suggest humble piety, Sundaramūrti reduces the deity to the level of an endearing companion, expressing the mystical import of his devotion that saw the Lord taking an active interest in the delight and tribulation of the devotee. Sundaramūrti's life is closely connected with Tiruvārūr, where the presiding deity of the temple helped him in many ways to make his life a pleasant one in all respects; and this is described dramatically in the *Periyapurāṇam*.[42]

In his hymns also, the norm comprises the various deeds of Śiva and the glorification of the Lord of Ārūr. The burning of Māṛa,[43] destruction of the triple-fort of Asuras to ashes,[44] killing the mad elephant,[45] and the swallowing of the poison to save the Dēvas[46] are

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39. தேவாரம், 4:5 and 101

40. தேவாரம், 4:5:1, 2 and 4

41. பெருகுவித்தென் பாவத்தைப் பண்டெலாம்
குண்டர்கள் தம் சொல்லே கேட்டு
. . . .
. . . .
. . . . ஆட்கொண்டு பிணிதீர்த்த ஆரூரர்தம்
அருகிருக்கும் விதியின்றி அறமிருக்க
மறம் விலைக்குக் கொண்டவாறே. -- அப்பர் V. 3

42. பெரியபுராணம். தடுத்தாட்கொண்டபுராணம் and
ஏயர்கோன் கலிக்காமநாயனுர் புராணம்

43. . . . . அடல்மதனன் பொடியாகச்
செவ்வணமான் திருநயனம் விழிசெய்த சிவமூர்த்தி -- சுந்தரர் தேவாரம், 7:51:2

44. வன்னுகம்நாண் வரைவில் அங்கிகணை அரிபகழி
தன்னுகமுற வாங்கிப் புரமெரித்த தன்மையனை -- சுந்தரர், V. 6

45. பேருரும் மதகரியின் உரியானைப் பெரியவர்தம்
சீருருந் திருவாரூர்ச் சிவனடியே -- சுந்தரர், V. 12

46. . . . . ஒலிகடல் நஞ்சமுதுண்ட
ஈசன் இருப்பதும் ஆரூர் -- சுந்தரர், 7:73:10

some of the important deeds of Śiva, which are singled out by Sundarar for singing His eulogy.

But the most important of his eight *padigams* on Ārūr is the *Tiruttoṇḍattogai*. In this *padigam*, he enlists the names of sixty-three *nāyanārs* of Śaivism, whose lives are narrated in detail in the *Periya-purāṇam* by Śēkkiḻār. In fact this *padigam* lends the basis and supplies the plot for Śēkkiḻār's monumental work and he acknowledges the same in it.[47]

That the deity took initiative to have Sundarar married to Paravai Nāchchiyār, an accomplished dancing girl at Tiruvārūr and also to Śangili Nāchchiyār at Tiruvoṟṟiyūr[48] is mentioned in his hymns. He also admits that, as a friend, Ārūran, even abetted some of his misdeeds.[49] Besides, when the deity turns out to be indifferent to his plea for restoring one of his eyes, which the former had made blind, he also takes freedom to curse the Lord.[50]

It may be clearly seen from a study of the *Tēvāram* hymns on the Tiruvārūr temple that they have from very early times preserved certain legends, traditions and festivals and that it was a popular religious centre deserving the special treatment from the three mystics, who sang elaborately in praise of the place and the presiding deity.

Māṇikkavāśagar, whose hymns constitute the *Tiruvāśagam*, has also sung about the deity in some of his hymns. But his *padigams* are arranged in a thematic order, and not on a topographical basis as the *Tēvāram* hymns. Hence his verses do not offer any information on the importance of the place but merely eulogise the deity. In one of his

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47. பெரியபுராணம். திருக்கூட்டச்சிறப்பு, V. 11.

48. மாழையொண்கண் பரவையைத்தந் தாண்டானை . . . . ,
சங்கிலியோடு எனைப்புணர்த்த தத்துவனை . . . .
-- சுந்தரர் தேவாரம், 7:51:10 and 11

49. . . . . என்னுடைய
தோழனுமாய் யான் செய்யும் துரிசுகளுக் குடனாகி -- சுந்தரர், V. 10

50. ஆளாயிருக்கும் அடியார் தங்கள் அல்லல் சொன்னக்கால்
வாளாங்கிருப்பீர் திருவாரூரீர் வாழ்ந்து போதிரே -- சுந்தரர், 7:95:1

hymns he says that Brahmā addresses Śiva as Ārūran. [51] It is suggested that as in this hymn Vishṇu addresses Śiva as Śemperumān, there is an implied reference to the legend connected with Āṭakēśvaram, wherefrom Śiva changed his abode to the ant-hill (*puṟṟu*), after which the city is known as Ārūr. [52]

The saint, in another verse, recalls with gratitude that Śiva infused divine knowledge to him at Tiruvārūr. [53] He also pledges that he would not praise anything else but the divine feet of the Lord of Ārūr. [54]

Chēramānperumāḷ, a contemporary of Sundaramūrti and one of the Nāyanārs described in the *Periyapurāṇam*, has sung the *Tiruvārūr mummaṇikkōvai*. The work possessing the characteristic of *ahatturai* (internal experiences) narrates the longing of a beloved for her lover, and the theme of Ārūr and its Lord appears appropriately throughout the work : the lady parted from the lover loses sleep, even as those sinful souls, that do not contemplate on Ārūran, are restless ; [55] and the heart of the lover, keeping himself off his beloved for a long time, is compared to the sacrifi-

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51. ஏரார் இளங்கிளியே எங்கள் பெருந்துறைக்கோன்
சீரார் திருநாமம் தேர்ந்துரையாய் - ஆரூரன்
செம்பெருமான் வெண்மலரான் பாற்கடலான் செப்புவபோல்
எம்பெருமான் தேவர் பிரான் என்று. - - திருவாசகம், திருத்தசாங்கம், 1.

52. Atakam means gold, and Atakesvara is rendered in Tamil as Semperuman, after the golden complexion attributed to Siva. Visnu's reference to this name perhaps implies his gratitude towards Siva, for his revival by the latter at Tiruvarur. *Ar* means *Purru* (ant-hills), and the references to Semperuman and Aruran respectively by Visnu and Brahma, imply the legends connected with Atakesvara and Vanmikanatha. Sri. K. S. Navanithakrishna Bharatiyar, Tiruvasagam -- Arayccipperurai, pp. 761-2.

53. தேனமர்சோலைத் திருவாரூரின்
ஞானந்தன்னை நல்கிய் நன்மையும் - - திருவாசகம், கீர்த்தி திருஅகவல், 73-4

54. ஓங்கெயில் சூழ் திருவாரூர் உடையானே அடியேன் நின்
பூங்கழல்க ளவையல்லாது எவையாதும் புகழேனே
- - திருவாசகம், திருப்புலம்பல், 1

55. யானே இன்னே
. . . . -
. . . . நல்வரம் அருளிய உத்தமன்
அந்தண் ஆரூர் சிந்தித்து மகிழா
மயரிய மாக்களைப் போலத்
துயருழந் தழியக் கண்துயிலாவே - - திருவாரூர் மும்மணிக்கோவை, 4, 13-18

cial stone (*balikkal*), kept at the outskirts of Tiruvārūr for village deities.[56]

The next phase of the religious history is marked by the *Periya-purāṇam* or *Tiruttoṇḍarpurāṇam* of Śēkkiḻār. The theme of this work consists of biographical sketches of the Śaiva Nāyanārs who dedicated themselves to Śiva. Following closely the Kamban idiom in its literary style, the *Periyapurāṇam* draws divine inspiration from the mystic fervour of the *Tēvāram* hymns. It depicts the lives of varied persons, forming a veritable intellectual and vocational spectrum, but their aims oriented to every thing great and noble in human life.

To make it conform to the norms of an epic, Śēkkiḻār makes Sundaramūrti a hero and lays the scene at Tiruvārūr. The reason for the choice, as he himself acknowledges, is that the *Periyapurāṇam* is based on the *Tiruttoṇḍattogai*, composed by Sundarar at Tiruvārūr.[57] Tiruvārūr is described by Śēkkiḻār as a beautiful city of huge structures, situated in an equally beautiful natural setting.

While describing the glory of Tiruvārūr, the legend relating to Manunīti's justice is mentioned ;[58] Tiruvārūr is also referred to as the capital of Manu Chōḻa, an ancestor of Anapāya. The latter can be identified with Kulōttuṅga II, and the royal contemporary of Śēkkiḻār, on the basis of an inscription at Tiruvārūr itself.[59] However, it is significant that Śēkkiḻār does not refer to the names of the son and minister of Manu, which are given in a Tiruvārūr inscription, assignable to a period earlier than that of Śēkkiḻār[60] It is also significant that he does not bring in any other legend relating to Tiruvārūr. The only exception in this connection is the hint in one of the verses that Lakshmi did penance at Tiruvārūr.[61]

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56. அரிவை பாகத்து அண்ணல் ஆரூர்
எல்லையில் இரும்பலி சொரியும்
கல்லோ சென்ற காதலர் மனமே — திருவாரூர் மும்மணிக் கோவை 1, 18-20
57. Supra, p. 25, n. 47.
58. பெரியபுராணம், திருநகரச் சிறப்பு vv. 13-50.
59. 269 of 1901; S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 485. Also infra, p. 58.
60. 163 of 1894 ; S.I.I., Vol. V, No. 455., Supra, p. 14.
61. மன்னுமாமலராள் வழிபட்டது . . . . . .
பெரியபுராணம், திருநகரச்சிறப்பு, v. 1 ;
cf: திருவிநாள் சேர்வதற்கு முன்னோ, பின்னோ
திருவாரூர் கோயிலா கொண்ட நாளே, அப்பர், தேவாரம், 6:34:1

Sundaramūrti's life, is described in vivid detail, and the role played by the Tiruvārūr deity is brought out in consonance with the hymns sung by Sundarar himself. [62]

Sundarar was born at Tirunāvalūr to Saḍaiyanār and Iśaiñāniyār, of Ādi Saiva sect. That Iśaiñāniyār, the mother of Sundarar was born at Tiruvārūr in the family of Ñānaśivāchārya of the Gautama-gōtra, is known from the Sanskrit portion of an inscription of Kulōttuṅga II, found on the west wall of the second *prākāra* of the temple. [63] It is an interesting piece of information, not found in *Periyapurāṇam.*

Sundarar stayed at Tiruvārūr for a long time and returned there often even during his long itineraries. Sundarar fell in love with Paravaiyār, a beautiful dancing woman of Tiruvārūr and Ārūran accomplished His devotee's wish by helping him to marry her. [64] Again when they fell apart, due to the marriage of Sundarar with Saṅgili Nāchchiyār of Tiruvoṟṟiyūr, the deity thawed the quarrel and reunited them; but an asseveration was also in store for Sundarar, when the Lord made him blind temporarily. [65]

Ēyarkōn Kalikkāmar and Viṟanmiṇḍar are two other *nāyanārs* whose lives are connected with Tiruvārūr. Both of them were antagonistic towards Sundarar for having put Śiva to trouble in resolving the quarrel between him and Paravai, as also for having failed to worship the congregation of the Śaiva devotees at the *Dēvāśriyan maṇṭapam.* However, Śiva intervened making both the *nāyanārs* good friends of Sundarar. [66]

Seruttuṇai and Kaḻaṟcingar are associated with the Araneṟi (Acalēśvara) shrine at Tiruvārūr. The former cuts the nose of the wife of the latter, a king, for having smelt a flower that was lying inside the

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62. *op. cit.,* தடுத்தாட்கொண்டபுராணம் ;
also சுந்தரர் தேவாரம், 7:51:10 and 11; 7:95

63. ஆளுடையநம்பி மாதாக்கள் இசைஞானியார்
ஜனனீ பவதோ ஞானசிவாசார்யகுலே பவத்
சைவே கௌதமகோத்ரேஸ்மின் ஞான்யாரவ்யா கமலாபுரீ
- 269 of 1901; S. I. I., Vol. VII, No. 485, 11:32-3

64. பெரியபுராணம், தடுத்தாட்கொண்டபுராணம், 137-80.

65. பெரியபுராணம், ஏயர்கோன் கலிக்காமநாயனார்புராணம், 228-65.

66. பெரியபுராணம், ஏயர்கோன் கலிக்காமநாயனார்புராணம் and விறன்மிண்ட நாயனார்புராணம்.

temple; Kaḻarcingar did his due to punish the impious deed by cutting off the queen's hand. However, Śiva appeared and praising the devotion of the *nāyanārs*, relieved the pain and distress of the queen. [67]

Daṇḍiyaḍigaḷ and Naminandi broke through Jaina opposition and established the supremacy of Saivism over the former. Daṇḍiyaḍigaḷ, a congenitally blind man, was clearing the temple tank, as a holy service to Siva, with the help of a chord tied between the tank and water level. Some Jainas, who were living nearby, disturbed the handicapped devotee and were punished by Siva by being made blind. At the same time vision was restored to Daṇḍiyaḍigaḷ. The defeated Jainas were driven out of Tiruvārūr by the king, who came to know of the devotion of the Aḍigaḷ. [68]

Naminandi, to prove the truth of his faith to the Jainas, who refused to give him oil for burning lamps at the temple, burnt many lamps all over the temple, by using water instead of oil. The Jainas were thus put to shame, through the grace of god. [69] It is interesting that this story is referred to by Appar in one of his hymns on Tiruvārūr, wherein he praises the miracle performed by Naminandi. [70]

Tiruvārūrppiṟandār, are a group of devotees, and include all who are born at Tiruvārūr. They are said to be free from the bondage of life, having taken birth at this holy centre, unique among all the *śivasthalas*. They are called as *śivagaṇas* by Sēkkiḻār. [71]

Sōmāśimāṟanāyanār was a great devotee of Śiva, who considered it his duty to feed and serve the *śivabhaktas* at Tiruvārūr. [72] The *sthalapurāṇas* of Tirukkaḍavūr and Tirumākāḷam, add that at the request of Sōmāśimāṟar, Tyāgarāja graced by his presence the *yāga* conducted by him at Tirumākāḷam, a nearby *sthala*. [73] Śēkkiḻār

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67. பெரியபுராணம், செருத்துணைநாயனார்புராணம் and கழற்சிங்கநாயனார்புராணம்.
68. பெரியபுராணம், தண்டியடிகள்புராணம்.
69. பெரியபுராணம், நமிநந்தியடிகள்புராணம்.
70. ஆரூர் நறுமலர்நாதன் அடித்தொண்டன் நம்பிநந்தி
நீரால் திருவிளக்கிட்டமை நீணாடறியுமன்றே -- அப்பர் தேவாரம், 4 : 102 : 2
71. பெரியபுராணம், திருவாரூர்ப் பிறந்தார் புராணம்.
72. பெரியபுராணம், சோமாசிமாறநாயனார்புராணம்.
73. எஸ். தண்டபாணி தேசிகர், திருவாரூர், p. 71; திருவாரூர்த் தலவரலாறு, p. 44.

however, does not refer to this incident; and it is only one of the many instances, wherein Sōkkiḻār scrupulously avoids certain incidents from his narration. Some of them might, however, have sprung up after his period. But even some of those ancient legends relating to Tiruvārūr, which were evidently known in his time, are not found in his work. Miracles are not wanting in the *Periyapurāṇam,* but Sēkkiḻār seems to have known exactly what to overlook to make the mystic import in each incident look prominent. In this respect his approach is more historical than any of his earlier or later hagiologists dealing with religious themes. [74]

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74. திருவாரூர் வி. கல்யாணசுந்தரன் (Ed.) திருத்தொண்டர்புராணம், Preface, p. viii.

TYAGARAJA

The present temple-complex at Tiruvārūr is named after Tyāgarāja, who is enshrined in a separate structure, on the southern side of the Vanmīkanātha shrine. Full of symbolism and mystic significance, Tyāgarāja is a popular store-house of mysterious secrecy; though less of him is seen, much of him is said. The metal image of Tyāgarāja, in fact comprises the Sōmāskanda group, but only the faces of the god, goddess and the divine child are exposed, the rest being completely covered.

The legend relating to the installation of the Tyāgarāja image at Tiruvārūr is an interesting one. Vishṇu, to redeem himself from a curse by Pārvati, whom he had failed to salute on one occasion, made a composite image of Siva, Umā and Subrahmaṇya (Sōmāskanda) and had the curse obviated by offering worship to it. Since then he was keeping the image, which came to be known as Tyāgarāja, on his chest. As Visṇu inhaled and exhaled, Tyāgarāja was performing the *ajapa* dance. Subsequently the image was presented by Visṇu to Indra.

Muchukunda, the great Chōḷa monarch and a devotee of Siva, relieved Indra from the Aśuras, and when asked what could be given to him as a token of gratitude, Muchukunda demanded the Tyāgarāja image. Indra caused six images to be made exactly similar to the original one and placing all the seven before Muchukunda, told him that he might take the image, if he was able to find out the original one. The indefatigable Chōḷa pointed out the original, and in turn was presented with all the seven images.

Reaching his capital, Tiruvārūr, he installed the Tyāgarāja image in a separate shrine by the side of Vanmīkanātha. The rest of the images were installed at six important places in his kingdom. Tirunaḷḷāṛu, Nāgappaṭṭinam, Tirukkāṛāyil, Tirukkōḷili, Tiruvāymūr and Tirumaṛaikkāḍu, all situated in the Kāvēri Delta.

That the Sōmāskanda concept has been held popular from very early times and is associated with the *aṣṭānga yōga* process (the means of physical control for realisation), is known from the legend. For the *ajapa* (that which is not chanted) dance of Tyāgarāja signifies the control and manoeuvre of breathing.[1] This association of the Tyāgarāja concept with the breath control methods of the psychophysical exercises seems to be very ancient, as Appar is found to refer to the theme of this deity resting on Vishṇu's chest.[2] Tirumūlar also speaks of the importance of the *ajapa* dance and stresses the significance of the *mantra* which is not actually chanted.[3]

Tyāgarāja, who is referred to as Vīdiviṭankan in the *Tēvāram* hymns and in the medieval inscriptions,[4] must have been in worship at Tiruvārūr from very early times. The image must originally have served as the *utsavamūrti* of Vanmīkanātha, for the latter is invariably referred to as *Mūlaṭṭānamuḍaiyār* in the *Tēvāram* hymns, and as *Mūlasthāna-muḍaiyār* in the inscriptions.[5] Appar refers to Vīdiviṭankan as being taken out in procession *(bhavani)*.[6] The *Tēvāram* hymns seem to

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1. यम नियम आसन प्राणायाम प्रत्याहार धारण ध्यान समाधय : अष्टावङ्गानि ;
तस्मिन् सति श्वास प्रश्वासयो : गतिविच्छेद : प्राणायाम :

The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, vol. I, Rajayoga, ch. II, [pp. 260 & 266.

2. பையஞ்சுடர்விடு நாகப்பள்ளி கொள்வானுள்ளத்தானும் ;

அப்பர் தேவாரம், 4:4:10

3. பொன்னான மந்திரம் புகலவும் ஒண்ணாது
பொன்னான மந்திரம் பொறிகிஞ்சுகத்தாகும்
பொன்னான மந்திரம் புகையுண்டு பூரிக்கில்
பொன்னாதும் வல்லோர்க்குடம்பு பொற்பாதமே ;

சொல்லிலும் பாசச் சுடர்ப்பாம்பு நீங்கிடும்
சொல்லும் திருக்கூத்தின் சூக்குமந்தானே

-- திருமந்திரம், தந்திரம் IV, vv. 906 & 908

4. *Supra*, P - 21, n. 33 & 34

5. அப்பர் தேவாரம், 4:52 & 101 ; 6:28, 30 & 32. 164 of 1894 ; 269 of 1901 ; 533, 534 and 563 of 1904 ; 672, 674, 673 and 677 of 1919

6. பவனி வீதி விடங்கனைக் கண்டிவள்
தவனி யாயின வாறென்றன் தையலே

அப்பர் தேவாரம், 5:7:8

distinguish between Ārūran and Tirumūlaṭṭāṉar[7] and the verses referring to the former name can be taken as addressed to Vīdiviṭankar (Tyāgarāja), and those mentioning the latter, to Vanmīkanātha. Again it is only in those hymns in which the deity is addressed as Ārūran, names and attributes peculiar to Tyāgarāja are mentioned by Appar.[8] In one verse Appar actually sings of 'Ārūran *alias* Vīdiviṭankan'.[9]

It is interesting to note in this connection that a Sōmāskanda image in the Bṛhadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr is called *Dakṣiṇamēruviṭankar* in one of the inscriptions of Rājarāja I (A.D. 985—1016), found in the same temple.[10] It is probable that in course of time the processional image at Tiruvārūr superseded the main deity in importance and popularity. A parallel development is found at Cidambaram, where the metal image of Naṭarāja is held in higher esteem than the main deity, due to the significance of the cosmic dance of the former.

The name, Tyāgarāja, seems to have been attributed to Vīdiviṭanka, sometime during the 15th–16th centuries. For until then the deity is referred to in inscriptions as Vīdiviṭankan in Tamil, and as Ārūradhipati in Sanskrit.[11] It is only in the inscriptions and religious literature that date from the 16th century, that the name Tyāgarāja occurs.[12]

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7. அப்பர் தேவாரம், (ஆரூரன்) 1:95 & 105; 2:79 & 101; 3:45; 4:4, 5, 19, 20, 21, 53 & 102; 5:6, 7, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31 & 32; 7:8, 37, 39, 51, 59, 73, 83 and 95.
(திருமூலட்டானர்) 4:52 & 101; 6:28, 30 and 34.
8. அப்பர் தேவாரம்., தேவரகண்டன் - 5:7:7, வீதிவிடங்கன் - 5:7:8.
ஆடரவக் கிண்கிணிக்காலழகன் - 4:19:10
9. . . . . . . ஆரூரான் எனும் பவனி வீதிவிடங்கனே - - அப்பர் தேவாரம், 5:7:8
10. *S.I.I.*, vol. II, No. 26; R. Nagaswamy, "Adavallan and Dakshinameruvitankar of the Tanjore temple," Lalit Kala, No. 12, pp. 36 - 8.

    It is interesting to note that in one of the inscriptions found on the walls of the Acalesvara shrine mention is made of Dhanma-Vitankadevar. As the main deity is referred to as Araneriyudaiyar and Aranerimahadeva bhattarakar, the Vitankar referred to in the inscription must be the Somaskanda image preserved in the Acalesvara shrine.

    568 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 613.
11. பூர்வாரூர்வாசி - 163 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, Vol. V, No. 455
ஸ்ரீ ஆரூரதிபஸ்ய - 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 485
12. 535 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 580. திருவாரூர் புராணம், பாயிரச்சருக்கம், v. 3. திருவாரூர்க் கோவை, vv. 3-10.

With the advent of the name Tyāgarāja, many facets of symbolic attributes were added—Vīdiviṭankan—reflecting deep significance. They are: *maṇittaṇḍu* (sceptre), *ratnasimhāsanam* (throne), *sengaḻunīrmālai* (garland), *vīragaṇḍayam* (sword), *pañcamukha vādyam*(five-faced drum), *suttamattaḷam* (a special type of *mṛdaṅgam*), *pārināyanam* (a pipe of South Indian variety, but with a longer tube than the conventional *nātas-varam*), *ayirāvaṇam* (elephant), and *āḻittēr* (chariot).

Except the elephant, which along with the *ajapa* dance, forms part of the subtler aspect of the Tyāgarāja concept and hence imaginary, the attributes unique to the deity can be seen in the temple;[13] the musical instruments are daily played during the evening services. Only on six occasions during a year, *abhishēka* is performed to the deity and even during such occasions the image is fully covered, but for the face, by cloth. On two occasions in a year, the feet of the deity are exposed for worship. Daily *abhishēkas* are performed to a *linga* made of emerald which is kept in a silver casket and preserved in the shrine. And the reasons for such secrecy are not known and are not found, even hinted, anywhere.

Mystery looms large against the empty cella of the deity's shrine, for the image is found installed in the vestibule (*antarāḷa*) and the *garbha-gṛha* proper is used as a safe-room for jewels (*tiruvābharaṇa aṛai*), the door of which opens right behind the deity. The west wall of this room seems to be a later screen, raised to cover an area, about five feet in breadth, and the breadth of the cella proper forming the length. The *garbhagṛha* is provided with a *tūmbu* (chute), to let out the *abhishēka* water, which is not

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13. It is interesting to find Appar referring to the elephant and chariot of Tyagaraja:

அயிராவணமேறுது ஆனேறு ஏறி அமரர்
நாடாளாதே ஆரூர் ஆண்ட;

ஊழித்தியன்னானை ஓங்கொலிமாப் பூண்டதோர்
ஆழித்தேர் வித்தகனை நான் கண்டது ஆரூரே -- அப்பர் தேவாரம், 6:25:1;
[4:19:7.

The great car of Tyagaraja, has become proverbial due to its huge proportions.

in use today as there is no deity in the *garbhagṛha*. From an inscription [14] dated in the 20th regnal year of Rajendra I, found in the same shrine, it is seen that the stone structure was erected in the 18th regnal year of Rajendra I (1030 A.D.) by one Nangai Paravai, an aṇukkiyār of the King. The inscription also states that the shrine was dedicated to Vīdiviṭanka. Evidently the main deity in the sanctum was an image of Sōmāskanda. In view of the association of Vishṇu with the Vīdiviṭanka concept it is probable that a figure of Vishṇu was also portrayed with the Sōmāskanda image. It is not known when the *garbhagṛha* proper fell into disuse.

It seems probable, from all the available evidences, that from the nucleus of an ancient mystic concept, the Viṭankan theory has grown into the Tyāgarāja cult, during the period between the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 18th century. It may be remembered that during this period many of the *sthalapurāṇas* for various temples of the Tamil country were written or took their final shape. A substratum of Śaiva religious literature, comprising many books in both Tamil and Sanskrit, devoted mainly to legends and traditions thus came into being. Tiruvārūr alone forms the theme for twenty-five Tamil books and sixteen Sanskrit books of that *genre*. Simple spiritual truths, both clear and profound in their import, are buried under pedantic pretensions in these works.

The Tyāgarāja images found in the rest of the *sapta viṭanka sthalas* (the seven important places where Muchukunda is said to have installed the images brought from Indra), are also attributed with their own names and dances, and with an equally opaque veil of secrecy wrapped around them like the Tiruvārūr Viṭankar. (See chart on p. 42 and map). However, Vīdiviṭankar stands unique and supreme among them, attracting the devotion of multitudes of devotees, even as he had attracted, long ago, the great saints.

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14. 680 of 1919.

THE *SAPTA VIṬANKAS*

No.	Place	Taluk	Name of the *Viṭankar*	Dance
1.	Tiruvārūr	Nāgappaṭṭinam	Vīdiviṭankar	*Ajapa naṭanam :* Dancing like the chest (of Vishṇu), moving up and down, and forward and backward.
2.	Tirunaḷḷāṛu	Pondicherry State	Nahaviṭankar	*Unmatta naṭanam :* Dancing like a mad man.
3.	Nāgappaṭṭinam	Nāgappaṭṭinam	Sundaraviṭankar	*Parāvāratarangа naṭanam :* Dancing like the waves of the sea.
4.	Tirukkāṛāyil	Nāgappaṭṭinam	Ādiviṭankar	*Kukkuṭa naṭanam :* Dancing like a cock.
5.	Tirukkōḷili (Tirukkuvaḷai)	Nāgappaṭṭinam	Avaniviṭankar	*Bhṛnga naṭanam :* Dancing like a bee, which circles in a flower.
6.	Tiruvāymūr	Nāgappaṭṭinam	Nīlaviṭankar	*Kamala naṭanam :* Dancing like a lotus, which trembles in breeze.
7.	Tirumaṛaikkāḍu (Vēdāraṇyam)	Tirutturaippūṇḍi	Buvaniviṭankar	*Hamsapāda naṭanam :* Dancing with the gait of a Swan.

HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE

The origins of most living temples in South India are shrouded in mystery and it is equally so with regard to the beginnings of the Tyāgarājasvāmi temple at Tiruvārūr, and as described in the preceding pages, evidences of the existence of pre-historic cults like tree-worship and ophiolatry are found in the temple, which also became important in the history of the resurgence of Śaivism, through its close association with many Nāyanārs. Again the Tiruvārūr temple can be distinguished from some other types of temples which were erected either as *paḷḷippaḍais* (sepulchral temples) or built at royal bidding. [1] The importance and popularity of such temples declined with the patrons or donors who were responsible for them, while temples of the type at Tiruvārūr, which have had a continuous history from a period going earlier than historic times and have played a large role in the theistic currents in South India, have not entirely depended on princely creations and munificence, though at the same time they have received substantial royal encouragement. In this section an attempt is made to reconstruct the history of the Tiruvārūr temple with the evidence supplied by epigraphy.

The temple-complex at Tiruvārūr is a growth, spread over many centuries, around six important shrines, *viz.* those of Vanmīkanātha, Tyāgarāja, Acalēśvara, Ānandēśvara and Siddhīśvara, found within the temple. The main shrine is actually a complex, comprising the double-shrine of Vanmīkanātha and Tyāgarāja, combined by a common *mukha-maṇṭapa.* However, the Vanmīkanātha shrine, on stylistic grounds, is more ancient than the adjoining Tyāgarāja shrine.

The stone inscriptions in the temple are found on the walls of the shrines of Tyāgarāja and Acalēśvara and on the walls of the first and second *prākāras.* Stray records are found on the basement of the

1. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas*, p. 695.

eastern *gōpura* of third *prākāra* and on the wall enclosing the Śankha *tīrtha* in the third *prākāra*. As a considerable portion of the basement of the Vanmīkanātha shrine, which seems to be the most ancient structure of the temple–complex, is built in by the raised flooring, ancient records, if there had been any, from this shrine are lost for ever.

Of the sixty stone inscriptions reported from the temple, forty-eight are dated in the regnal years of the Cōḷa kings. The earliest inscription in the temple is found on the west wall of the *maṇḍapa* in front of the Acalēśvara shrine. It belongs to the reign of a Rājakēsari, registering in his 20th regnal year an agreement by the *ūravar* of Tiruvārūr to supply daily oil for two perpetual lamps against a gift of land by an individual.[2] This record along with two others are found engraved in characters assignable to the 12th century. One of the latter two records gives the name of the king as *Maduraikoṇḍa Parakēsari* and is evidently a record of Parāntaka I (A D. 907–955).[3] This proves that these three records are later copies, re–engraved on the wall of the *maṇḍapa*, of records which must have been found on the walls of a previous structure. Stylistically too, this *maṇḍapa* is later than the original shrine, and obviously an addition. The main shrine of Acalēśvara seems to have been rebuilt as a stone structure by Śembian Mahādēvi, either during the closing years of the reign of her son, Uttama Cōḷa (A.D. 970–985) or in the early regnal years of Rājarāja[4] (A.D 985–1016). It seems that while the original brick structure was converted into one of stone, a portion of the original shrine, probably a *maṇḍapa*, was left undisturbed. That structure could have had these records engraved on its walls and when it was replaced by the present *maṇḍapa* they were re-engraved on the western wall.[5] Though found inscribed in later characters·

2. 572 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XIII, No. 291.
3. 573 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 619.
4. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 617.
5. That even brick structures had slabs bearing inscriptions fixed in their walls is known from a record from the Tiruvikrama Perumal temple at Tirukkoyilur, South Arcot Dist. (123 of 1900; *E.I.*, vol. VII, pp. 145-6). This inscription dated in the sixth regnal year of Rajendra II (A.D. 1015-1063), states that as the central shrine built of bricks had become old and cracked, it was completely rebuilt in granite (*karunkal*) and records found on the walls of the old structures were re-engraved on the new one. There are similar instances of re-engraving elsewhere also.

the three inscriptions have to be assigned to a period prior to those of Uttama Chōḷa and Rājarāja I, during one of whose reigns, the shrine was rebuilt in stone.

Accordingly, the Rājakēsari, whose record of the 20th regnal year is referred to above may be identified with Āditya I (A.D. 871–907). One of the other two re-engraved inscriptions, as said earlier, gives the name of the king as *Maduraikoṇḍa Parakēsari*, which is a title of Parāntaka I. It is dated in the 232nd day of his 32nd regnal year and registers a gift of gold by an individual for a perpetual lamp in the temple.[6] The other inscription dated in the 110th day of the 6th regnal year of a Parakēsari, may also be assigned to Parāntaka I, for the individual Kurukālan Tirumūlaṭṭānattoṇḍan, who figures in Āditya's inscription seems to be the donor in this record also, which registers a gift of gold for a perpetual lamp.[7]

The earliest instance of royal patronage to the temple is provided by a record, dated in the second regnal year of Rājarāja I (A.D. 985–1016), which registers a gift of silver vessels to Tiruvaraneṛi Āḻvār by Śembiyan Mahādēvi, the queen of Gaṇḍarāditya (A.D. 950–957) and mother of Uttama Chōḷa (A.D. 970–985). This gift was given for the merit of Uttama Chōḷa.[8] In the seventh regnal year of Rājarāja I, she presented 234 *kāśu* for offerings to two images set up by her in the shrine, which was built in stone by her.[9] It has been suggested on the basis of this inscription that the conversion of this shrine into a stone structure took place in the seventh regnal year of Rājarāja I.[10] But the suggestion is not acceptable as there is another record of Rājarāja, dated in his second regnal year, on the south wall of the same shrine.[11] So the conversion must have taken place either late in the reign of Uttama Chōḷa or during the first two regnal years of Rājarāja I. This is also borne out by the absence of inscriptions assignable to Uttama Chōḷa's period.

6. 573 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 619.
7. 574 of 1904.
8. 570 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XIII, No. 1
9. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 617.
10. S. R. Balasubrahmanyam, *Four Chola Temples*, p. 38.
11. 570 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XIII, No. 1.

A reference to the pious building activities of Śembian Mahādēvi, noble at once by birth and life, may not be out of place. Apart from generously endowing gifts of lamps, utensils and ornaments to many temples, she built many shrines and converted many brick structures into stone shrines. Tiruvallam, Kōnērirājapuram, Śembian Mahādēvi, Āḍuturai, Tirunāgēśvaram and Tirumaṇañjēri, all in the Tañjāvūr district, are the places where she had either erected new shrines or converted brick structures into stone ones.[12] The conversion of the brick shrine of Acalēśvara into one of stone is just another instance of her pious disposition. She also endowed silver vessels and gold for purposes of renovation for the same shrine.

Rājarāja I's accession marked the inauguration of new phases in art and architecture as in the revival of religious activity. Apart from numerous shrines erected or brick ones converted into stone ones, the Great Temple of Bṛhadīśvara at Tañjāvūr was built by this great emperor. The temple is but a symbol proving at once the growth of the Chōḷa power into a formidable one, the popularity attained by Śaivism and the rapid strides made during the period in the fields of architecture, sculpture and painting. The grants made to the temple included lands, large quantities of gold and numerous ornaments. Befitting the place of the great temple in the socio-religious life at the capital, a strange migration of musicians and dancing girls was ordered by the king to Tañjāvūr. Accordingly dancing girls from various other shrines already existing in the Chōḷa country migrated to Tañjāvūr and each one was granted a house and a piece of land. An inscription from the Bṛhadīśvara temple, dated in the 21st regnal year of Rājarāja I lists the names of the dancing girls thus imported from other shrines and settled in the neighbourhood of the Tañjāvūr temple, by way of allotting one *vēli* of land per head.[13]

Each girl is referred to by her name, and the shrine and place from which she hailed. Tiruvārūr had the honour of supplying forty-four girls to this noble colony and they are referred to in the Tañjāvūr inscription as

12. *A.R.E.*, 1925-26, p. 105.

13. *ஸ்ரீ ராஜராஜீஸ்வரமுடையார் தளிச்சேரிப்பெண்டு*
களாகச் சோழமண்டலத்துத் தளிச்சேரிகளில்
நின்றுங் கொண்டுவந்து ஏற்றின தளிச்சேரிப்
பெண்டுகளுக்கும் நிலந்தமாகப் பங்கு செய்தபடி . . . . .
- - *S.I.I.*, vol. II, No. 66.

having been previously attached to the following shrines at Tiruvārūr: Tiruvaraneri, Arumoḷi Īśvara, Ulagīśvara, Brahmīśvara and Paravaiyuṇmaṇḍaḷi. While the first and last of the above names can be easily identified respectively with the Acalēśvara shrine situated within the temple–complex, and the Satyavācakēśvara shrine in the east main street, there are difficulties in assigning the other names to the existing shrines. However, the three names might have denoted the Āṭakēśvaram, Ānandēśvaram and Siddhīśvaram, the three other important shrines of the temple, but it is not definitely known which name was given to which shrine. Though the Vanmīkanātha shrine is referred to as Tirumūlaṭṭānam in the Tiruvārūr inscriptions, the Tañjāvūr record does not refer to the shrine. But it mentions the names of dancing girls transferred from Periyataḷiccēri, situated in Tiruvārūr. This quarter (*cēri*) of Tiruvārūr may be taken to refer to the place where the people connected with the Big Shrine (*Periya-taḷi*), i.e. Vanmīkanātha shrine, lived.

From the references in the Tañjāvūr inscription it is known that even when the Great Temple at Tañjāvūr was erected, Tiruvārūr was already a famous temple–city, in which many shrines were existing with separate bodies of dancing girls attached to each of them. Some of the names of the dancing girls hailing from Tiruvārūr are interesting. Here those names are given along with the shrines to which they were attached (the latter, within brackets), before their final transfer to Tañjāvūr: Tirumūlaṭṭānam (Periyataḷiccēri), Ārūr (Brahmīśvara), Vīdiviṭangi (Periyataḷiccēri), Sundara–chōḷi (Tirumaṇḍaḷi) and *Ārā amudu* (Tiruvaraneri).

That the temple continued to be an object of royal interest and patronage is borne out by the evidence of the Tiruvārūr inscriptions registered in the regnal years of kings who succeeded Rājarāja I. An inscription dated in the 20th year of Rājēndra I (A.D. 1012–44), beginning with the introduction "*Tirumanni vaḷara*" is found on the north and west walls of the Tyāgarāja shrine.[14] It gives a list of gifts, including a number of jewels and lamps, to the god Vīdiviṭankadēvar. It records that the temple was built in stone in the 18th regnal year of the king by Aṇukkiyār Paravai Naṅgaiyār. Besides, the same lady liberally endowed gold for plating and gilding parts of the *vimāna*, the entrance

14. 680 of 1919.

and the four sides of the shrine.[15] Copper was also donated for plating the doors, and corbels of the pillars of the *maṇḍapa* in front of the shrine. This long inscription meticulously records the weight of the endowed gold and copper, besides listing the various ornaments gifted to the temple with description of each of them. A dramatic touch, rare in the records of this sort, is provided by this inscription which says that in his 20th regnal year. Rājēndra (I) arrived at the shrine along with Aṇukkiyār Paravai Naṅgaiyār by chariot and offered worship at the shrine. A standing brass lamp (*kuttu viḷakku*) was set up at the place where the king and the Aṇukkiyār took their stand during worship,[16]

This inscription is of great value as it shows the conversion of the Thyāgarāja shrine into one of stone and also describes the king's visit to the shrine. The picture reconstructed from the record is clear and interesting; between the 16th and 18th regnal years of Rājēndra, the conversion of the brick structure into a stone one was completed; between the 38th day of the 18th regnal year and the 199th day of the same year the gilding and plating work was completed; and in his 20th regnal year, the king along with Paravai visited the shrine.

What with the gifts she made to the temple, the honour she had to be seated by the king in his chariot, and the commemorative lamp set up in the shrine to mark the place where she stood by the king, Aṇukkiyār Paravai Naṅgaiyār cannot be taken to be a servant of Rājēndra's as has been suggested.[17] Though the term *aṇukki* literally means 'a lady who is nearby', the role of Paravai Naṅgai seems to have been a different one. She was not one of Rājēndra's queens, but seems to have been his favourite. Though her native place is not given in the inscription, it can

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15. உடையார் வீதிவிடங்க தேவர் கோயிலில் குடத்திலும்,
வாய்மடையிலும், நாலுநாசியிலும், உள்
குட்டத்திலும் . . . . . . -- Ibid.

16. உடையார் ஸ்ரீ ராஜேந்திர சோழ தேவரும்
அணுக்கியார் பரவை நங்கையாரும் நிற்குமிடந்
தெரியும் குத்துவிளக்கொன்றும் . . . . . -- Ibid.

17. *A.R.E.*, 680 of 1919, Contents.

safely be surmised that she belonged to Tiruvārūr, where during those times Paravai was a popular name.[18]

The affection Rājēndra had towards this lady seems to have been so great that a village was named after her as Paravaipuram and a temple was named after her as Paravai-Īśvaram.[19] The place is the present Panaiyavaram in Villupuram taluk, South Arcot district. That Paravai commanded respect in others' eyes also is borne out by the fact that later in the reign of Rājādhirāja I (A.D. 1018–1054) provision was made for offerings to the images of Rājēndra and Paravai Naṅgai set up in the Tiruvārūr temple.[20] It is not clear from the record whether the images were set up during the reign of Rājādhirāja I, or in the reign of Rājēndra himself. Another inscription assignable to Rājēndra II (A.D. 1051–63) from Panaiyavaram states that provisions were made for offerings to the images of Rājēndra (I) and Paravai Naṅgaiyār set up at the temple of Paravai–Īśvaramuḍaiya Mahādēva at Paravaipuram.[21] However, whether installed during the time of Rājēndra I or later, the fact that the images were respected and that provisions were made for them for offerings, both at Tiruvārūr and Paravaipuram proves the respect commanded by Naṅgai Paravaiyār. For the unique privilege of being represented in image form by the side of the king's image in an important temple was usually reserved for the chief queen, governed both by the norms of royalty and the elevated position of the person thus represented.[22]

18. One of the dancing girls transferred from Tiruvarur to Tanjavur during Rajaraja's time bore the name Paravai (*S.I.I.*, Vol. II, No. 66). An inscription from Vedaranyam, assignable to Aditya I, records a gift made by one Nangai Paravai of Tiruvarur (*S.I.I.*, Vol. XIII, No. 24). The popularity of this particular name here is due to the association of Sundaramurti with Tiruvarur, where he married 'Paravai Nacchiyar' an accomplished dancing girl of the city, through the graces of the Lord of Arur (Taduttatkondapuranam, *Periyapuranam*).

19. 317 of 1917.

20. 679 of 1919.

21. 320 of 1917.

22. At the Tanjavur temple images of Rajaraja I and his chief queen Ulagamahadevi were set up in bronze, *S.I.I.*, II, No. 38.

The Tiruvārūr inscription of Rājādhirāja I further refers to a *maṇḍapa* raised in the temple by Paravai and named by her as *Rājēndrasōḷan Tirumaṇḍapam.*[23] This shows the love the lady had for the king and the noble way in which she commemorated his name, even as the king built a temple after her name at distant Panaiyavaram. The same record of Rājādhirāja refers to the lady as Aṇukkiyār Nakkan Paravai Naṅgaiyār. Nakkan means an accomplished dancing girl attached to a temple.[24] It is remarkable that the king gave expression to his affection to this dancing girl in a noble way and that she also acknowledged it in the same way. This interesting side light on Rājēndra's life thrown by the Tiruvārūr inscriptions is corroborated by the Panaiyavaram records.

On the west and south walls of the Thyāgarāja shrine is found an inscription registering an order from a king whose name is given merely as Kōnērinmaikoṇḍān.[26] The order is dated in the 244th day of the 31st regnal year of the king. The record makes provision for offerings and scented water to god Tiruvaraneṛi Uḍaiyār. Further provisions were made to celebrate the *Śatayam* of Arpasi and *Ārdra* of Āḍi, which are indicated respectively as the asterisms of the king's father and the king. This inscription can safely be assigned to Rājēndra I, whose asterism was Ārdra, and it is known from other records also that his father, Rājarāja I's asterism was Śatayam of Arpasi (Ayppasi).[27]

Rājādhirāja I (A. D. 1018–54) is represented by two inscriptions found respectively on the north and west walls,[28] and on the south wall[29] of the Thyāgarāja shrine. The former refers to a grant of land made to the temple by Aṇukkiyār Nakkan Paravai Naṅgaiyār and to a *maṇḍapa* called *Rājēndrachōḷadēvan,* raised in the temple by the same lady. It also registers provision made for the offerings to the images of Rājēndra Chōḷa and Paravai. The latter records the order of the king for the erection of a golden pavilion for the God Uḍaiyār Vīdiviṭankadēvar and executed by an official in the 31st year of the king.

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23. 679 of 1919.
24. *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. IV, p. 2122.
25. 680 of 1919.
26. 674 of 1919.
27. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *op. cit.*, pp. 168 and 194.
28. 679 of 1919.
29. 670 of 1919.

Of the six inscriptions of Rājēndra II (A.D. 1051–1063), found in this temple, only one contains the royal order. The other five inscriptions, four dated in his 8th regnal year and the fifth in his ninth, register various gifts to the temple by private individuals.[30] The regnal year is lost in the inscription that records the king's order after which Vēḷāḷa-kūttan *alias* Śembiyan Mūvēndavēḷān covered with gold certain portions of the *garbhagṛha* and the *ardhamaṇḍapa* of the Vanmīkanātha shrine.[31]

There are six inscriptions in the temple found dated in the regnal years of Kulōttuṅga I (A.D. 1070–1120). His earliest inscription here, is however dated in his 23rd regnal year. None of them contains any royal order, or directly refers to the king. They register grants by private individuals for lamps and provision for bathing the deity. However, Kulōttuṅga's seem to be the earliest inscriptions engraved on the *prākāra* walls of the temple.[32] And for the first time reference to the *Dēvāśriyan Maṇḍapam* (the thousand–pillared *maṇḍapa*) is found in one of his records.[33] Again direct reference to the shrine of the goddess in the *Ulaguyyakkoṇḍa-kāmakōṭṭam.*[34]

On the north and south walls of the second *prākāra* are found eight inscriptions registered in the regnal years, ranging from the 3rd to 8th, of Vikrama Chōḷa. Five of them deal with gifts of land and a tank to the temple by private individuals. Of the remaining three records, one contains the legend of Manunīti Chōḷa, driving his chariot over his son to dispense justice to a cow whose calf was accidentally run over by the prince.[35] However, as seen earlier the historicity of the legend is not established through this record, as the period in which Manu Chōḷa lived is not given.[36] The other two records are connected with the above inscription; they relate to the grant of palace-site (*māḷigaimanai*) made to Candraśēkharan Ādivitankan of Pālaiyūr, who claimed to be a descendant of the minister of Manunīti Chōḷa.[37]

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30. 673, 676, 677 and 678 of 1919; 534 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 579.
31. 675 of 1919.
32. 541, 544 and 561 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, Nos. 586, 589 & 606.
33. 561 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 606.
34. 541 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 586.
35. 163 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, Vol. V. No. 455.
36. *Supra*, pp. 14-5.
37. 164 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, Vol. V, No. 456.
    545 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 590.

The next king to be represented here is Kulōttunga II (A.D. 1133–1150). On the west wall of the second *prākāra* three inscriptions dated in his regnal years are found. One record issued in his seventh regnal year contains the royal order making provision for services and festivals at the temple.[38] This long inscription is found in an excellent state of preservation and lays down elaborate details of arrangements for various services and festivals. The main purpose of the record is to register grants for offerings to the images of Tiruñānasambandar, Sundaramūrti set up in the Vanmikanātha shrine. Besides it registers additional grants for festivals, regularly celebrated in the temple.

The *captatio benevelentioe* portion of the inscription which is in Sanskrit is at once interesting and important. In that the king calls himself as *Anapāya* and styles himself as a bee at the lotus feet of Naṭēśa at Cidambaram (Golden Hall in the excellent Vyāgrahāra). This proves that the Chōḷa king *Anapāya* referred to by Śekkiḷār in his *Periyapurāṇam*,[39] is none other than Kulōttuṅga II, whose inscription begins with the *praśasti, Pūmannupadumam*".[40] That he was devoted to the Lord at Cidambaram is clearly spelt out by him in this inscription. Equal was his devotion, it seems, to the Lord at Ārūr as this record, which is the longest inscription found in the temple, proves: it renames a nearby area as Anapāyanallūr, after clubbing together two villages, Tiruvādiraimaṅgalam and Āmūr, for meeting the expenses of the provision for daily services and festivals conducted on specific occasions at the temple. The painstaking and faithful recording of minute details involving of the pieces of land granted for each particular purpose along with the annual revenue accruing from them deserves as much admiration as the noble purpose of the grant itself.

The next record registered in the tenth regnal year of Kulōttunga II gives astronomical details regularly corresponding to 30th November, A.D. 1142. It refers to the exemption of certain pieces of

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38. 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 485.
39. பெரியபுராணம், திருநாட்டுச் சிறப்பு, v. 35., திருநகரச்சிறப்பு, v. 13.
40. S. I. I. Vol. II, pt. II, p. 153., T. V. சதாசிவ பண்டாரத்தார், பிற்காலச் சோழர் சரித்திரம், Vol. II, p. 99.

the temple lands from taxes by the assembly of Rājarāja Brahmamaṅgalam.[41] This is followed by another inscription dated in the 12th regnal year of the king, recording a gift of land to the temple by an individual. It refers incidentally to a land survey made in the 16th regnal year of Sungantavirttaruḷina dēva, i.e., Kulōttunga I (A.D. 1070–1120).[42]

On the west wall of the first *prākāru* is found an incomplete introduction beginning with the words *Pū maruviya poḷil ēḻum.*[43] This belongs evidently to Rājarāja II (A.D. 1146–63). No other record of this king is found here.

There are four records found on the east wall of the first *prākāra*, right of entrance, belonging to the reign of Rājādhirāja II (A.D. 1163–78), who succeeded Rājarāja II. One of them contains the order of the king for the eviction of some *ceṭṭis* from the house-sites belonging to the temple, which they encroached while the sites were in the enjoyment of the servants of the temple. The original allotment to the servants is said to have been made by an order of Vikrama Cōla.[44] This inscription is dated in the fifth regnal year of the king. It is further stated in the inscription that the order was issued by Rājādhirāja II at the instance of Pallavarājan.[45]

This Pallavarājan, whose full name is Vēdavanamudaiyan Ammaiyappan *alias* Pallavarājan of Paḷaiyanūr, is the donor in the other three records of Rājādhirāja II's time at Tiruvārūr. In the second regnal year of the king, Pallavarājan endows land for offerings to the deity; in the ninth and tenth years he respectively endows lands to god Mūlasthānamudaiyār and the goddess at the temple.[46] This individual seems to have held a high office under Rājādhirāja II and he figures in an important

41. 553 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 598.
42. 552 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 597.
43. 547 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 592.
44. 543 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 588.
45. . . . இப்படிக்குக் கே[ரயி]விலே கல்வெட்டவும் பெறவேணுமென்று பல்லவ ராஜன் நமக்குச் சொன்னமையில் இப்படி செ[ய்யக்] கடவதாகச் சொல்லி . . .
- - Ibid., ll 11-12
46. 538, 542 and 540 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, Nos. 583, 587 & 585.

inscription from Pallavarāyanpēṭṭai.[47] The Pallavarāyanpēṭṭai inscription is dated in the eighth year of Rājādhirāja II and says that Vēdavanamuḍaiyāṇ Ammaiyappan *alias* Pallavarāyan decided the distribution of the lands of Tiruccirrambalam Uḍaiyān Perumāṇambi *alias* Pallavarāyar of Kārigaikkuḷattūr among the latter's relatives after his death. This Perumāṇambi seems to be the predecessor of Ammaiyappan in the office of Pallavarāyan (also Pallavarājan). He installed Rājādhirāja II, a grandson of Vikrama Chōḷa through a daughter, on the throne, after the death of Rājārāja II, who left behind two small children. According to Rājādhirāja II's orders, Perumāṇambi took a leading role in the dynastic dispute over the Pāṇḍya throne between Parākrama Pāndya and Kulaśēkhara Pāṇḍya. Parākrama was helped by Parākramabāhu, the king of Ceylon. The dynastic dispute took great dimensions when Lankāpuriḍaṇḍanāyaka, the Ceylonese general entered the main land, espousing the cause of Parākrama and sacked the Pāṇḍya country. But Perumāṇambi succeeded in defeating the Ceylonese army and installed Kulaśēkhara on the Pāṇḍya throne.[48]

These exploits are recounted in the Pallavarāyanpēṭṭai inscription, which says that subsequently Perumāṇambi died of illness. Perumāṇambi, as revealed by this record, served loyally both Rājarāja II and Rājādhirāja II. It has been suggested that Ammaiyappan Vēdavanamuḍaiyām, the successor of Perumāṇambi in the office of Pallavarāyan, came into prominence only in the reign of Rājādhirāja II.[49] But one of the Tiruvārūr inscriptions gives the name of this Pallavarāyan as Paḷaiyanūruḍaiyān Vēdavanamuḍaiyān *alias* Rājarāja Viḷupparaiyan.[50] This title suggests that he served Rājarāja II also. It is possible that he was a subordinate officer during Rājarāja's time and was appointed, by Rājādhirāja, as Pallavarājan after the demise of Perumāṇambi.

Ammaiyappan Vēdavanmuḍaiyān seems to have inherited from Perumāṇambi, both the office and the legacy of Chōḷa intervention in the Pāṇḍyan dynastic dispute. For an inscription dated in the 12th regnal

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47. 433 of 1924; *E.I.*, vol. XXI, No 31, pp. 184-193.
48. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-9.
49. Ibid., p. 373.
50. 538 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII. No. 583.

year of Rājādhirāja from Tiruvālangāḍu[51] in the North Arcot district narrates that Ammaiyappan Vēdavanamuḍaiyān organised an expedition against Ceylon to thwart the further plans of Parākramabāhu, who was organising to attack the mainland to place his *protēgē*, Vīra Pāṇḍya, son of Parākrama Pāṇḍya on the throne. But Ammaiyappan successfully frustrated the plans of the Ceylonese king by sending a huge army to Ceylon, the action spearheaded by a rival claimant to the Ceylonese throne, Śrī Vallabha.[52] Besides Vēdavanamuḍaiyān punished Kulaśēkhara, who proved ungrateful to the Chōḷa monarch, by placing Vīra Pāṇḍya on the throne of Madurai. The unfailing Pallavarāyan's services were commended by the Chōḷa monarch through a grant of ten *vēlis* or *iṛaiyili* land at Paḷaiyanūr.[53]

Vēdavanamuḍaiyān Ammaiyappan *alias* Pallavarājan seems to have been an able and loyal lieutenant of Rājādhirāja II. As his title Rājarāja-viḷupparaiyan clearly indicates, he served Rājarāja II also, before assuming office as Pallavarājan in the reign of Rājādhirāja. His sence of justice is borne out by the evidence of one of the Tiruvārūr inscriptions, which records, as mentioned earlier, that at his instance the king ordered the eviction of the Ceṭṭis from temple lands who had illegally occupied the house-sites allotted originally to the temple servants. In one of the records that mention his gifts to the Tiruvārūr temple, a village by name Ammaiyappan is mentioned.[55] It is also stated that the village was originally called Śiṛukūṛṛanallūr and that it was later divided and renamed as Ammaiyappan *alias* Rājarājanpottūr. This indicates that during Rājarāja II's reign, Ammaiyappan Vēdavanamuḍaiyān was granted a village by the king in appreciation of his services. This gift seems to have been tax-free (*iṛaiyili*), as Vēdavanamuḍaiyān claims the village as his own in the record.[56] Ammaiyappan is now a small village, four miles to the west of Tiruvārūr. Paḷaiyanūr, the native place of the Pallavarājan is situated

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51. 465 of 1905.
52. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-9.
53. 465 of 1905; *E.I.*, vol. XXII, No. 14.
54. 543 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 588.
55. 542 of 1904; *S.I.I*, vol. XVII, No. 587.
56. என் காணியான குலோத்துங்க சோழ வளநாட்டு வேளா நாட்டு [சி]றுகூற்ற நல்லூர்ப் பிறிந்த ராஜராஜன் பொத்தூரான அம்மை[அப்பநல்லூர்] . . .

-- Ibid., l. 4.

in the Tiruttaṇi taluk of the Chingleput district. It is remarkable that this valorous general was granted a village near Tiruvārūr by the king and that he held the Tiruvārūr temple and the deities in it in high esteem and devotion. He also evinced active interest in the affairs of the temple.

That Ammaiyappan Vēdavanamuḍaiyān continued to serve also Kulōttunga III (A.D. 1178–1218) is known from an inscription on the east wall of the first *prākāra*. In the eighth regnal year of the king, Ammaiyappan made a grant of land to the temple for burning lamps for the deities.[57]

In one of the records of Rājādhirāja II found in the temple, the *praśasti* which begins with the words *Kaḍalśūḻnda pārēḻum* affords a variant from the fifth line upto which it resembles the *praśasti* of his predecessor Rājarāja II.[58] The fifth line describes how the queens were given royal honours with the king and continues to describe one of the queens as 'the jewelled lamp to the Chōḷa race that appeared from the Yādava stock'.[59] The reference is evidently to the contemporary ruling family of the Yādava stock, the Hoysaḷas, with whom the Chōḷas might have had some marital connections. This record then proceeds to describe the queen consort in glowing terms. It says that she enjoyed the rights of kingship in full by being crowned with the king and that she ruled from the following places mentioned in the order of Uraiyūr, Pēruragai, Udagai and Madhurāpuri. This is a rare instance of a queen having governed from secondary capital cities in the Tamil country. For a description of a queen consort as found in this record is not ordinarily met with in any *praśasti* of the Chōḷas or even of the Pāṇḍyas.[60]

The difficulty of stating the exact year in which Rājādhirāja II was crowned is in no way lessened by the Tiruvārūr inscriptions registered during his period. Both A.D. 1163 and 1166 can be taken as the years of

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57. 537 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 582.
58. 540 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 585
59. . . . . சோள[குல]மணிவிளக்குச் சோள குல மாணிக்கம் . . . . . முடிகவித்தாள் மண்ணரசர் வந்தி[றை]றஞ்ச மகுடம் புனை வளவனுடன் பெண்ணரசும் பெருந் தாயமும் பெற்றருளும் பெண் [பெ]ருமாள் உறையூரும் பேருரகையு முதகையு மதுராபுரியு முறைமுறை [ய]ாண்டருளி . . . . வந்தருளிய உலகுடைய முக்கோக்கிழானடியுடன் வாழி வாழி . . . . .
  - - *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 585, ll 5-6.
60. *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, "Introduction", p. iv.

his accession.[61] Two Tiruvārūr inscriptions respectively dated in the second and tenth regnal years of Rājādhirāja furnish astronomical details.[62] While those given by the former regularly correspond both to 15th April A.D. 1168, and 30th March A.D. 1164, the date of the latter seems to be either 24th February A.D. 1176, or 27th February A.D. 1166.[63]

There are found four inscriptions on the east, west and north walls of the first *prākāra*, dated in the regnal years of Kulōttunga III (A.D. 1178-1218), the last great Chōḷa monarch. The dates range from his eighth regnal year to the 39th. While three of the records register grants of land to the temple, one of them being the gift by Vēdavanamuḍaiyān Ammaiyappan, the fourth seems to record an order from the king for the redistribution of tax-free lands among hundred servants of the temple.[64]

Three inscriptions of Kulōttunga III, found engraved on the south wall of the central shrine, and on the outer *gōpura* of the Kampaharēśvara temple at Tribhuvanam in the Tañjāvūr district recount the building activities of the monarch after narrating his martial exploits.[65] Apart from erecting the temple of Kampaharēśvara at Tribhuvanam and building the *mukhamaṇḍapa*, the *gōpura* of the shrine of the goddess and the verandah enclosing the central shrine at Chidambaram, the king claims to have built the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* and the big *gōpura* of Vālmīkādhipati (i.e., the temple at Tiruvārūr). Though no such inscriptions of Kulōttunga are found at Tiruvārūr, the *resume* given by the Tribhuvanam record must be accepted, and the *Sabhāpati Maṇḍapa* in the third *prākāra* and the massive eastern *gōpura* of the same *prākāra* of the Tiruvārūr temple have to be considered as the work of Kulōttunga.

In two other inscriptions respectively from Śēranūr and Kuḍumiyāmalai, Kulōttunga claims to have distributed the tribute of gold and *iṛaiyili* (lands) levied from the country of the Cēras and Pāṇḍyas among

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61. K. A Nilakanta Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 360.
62. 538 and 540 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, Nos. 583 and 585.
63. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 359; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, "Introduction", p. iii.
64. 537, 550, 554 and 559 of 1904; *S. I. I.* Vol. XVII, Nos. 582, 595, 599, and 604.
65. 190, 191 and 192 of 1907; *A. R. E.*, 1907-08, pt. II, pp.67-68.

the temples of Cidambaram, Tiruvārūr and Tribhuvanam.[66] After the last inscription of Kulōttunga III (assignable to A.D, 1216–17), there is a gap of about forty years and the next king to be represented by inscriptions at this temple is Rājēndra III (A.D. 1246–79). Two inscriptions dated in his regnal years are found on the north wall of the first *prākāra*. One of them records three different dates, *viz.*, the 13th, the 20th and the 23rd regnal years of the monarch.[67] The other record also registers a grant of land to the temple in the 23rd regnal year of the king.[68]

Two inscriptions dated in the regnal years of Pāṇḍya kings are found on the west and east walls of the first *prākāra*. Though they do not contain any royal orders they attest the Pāṇḍyan sway over the Cōḷa country, as suggested by the fact that they were issued in the regnal years of the Pāṇḍya monarchs. Thus with these inscriptions an epoch in the administration of the Tiruvārūr temple came to an end. No longer the Chōḷa seal shone on the affairs of the temple, under whose patronage and initiative the South Indian Temple had risen to a great position and served as the centre of much social activity. The position of the temple did not die out but continued in the subsequent periods also, under different dynasties.

The first non-Chōḷa inscription belongs to the period of Māṛavarman Kulaśēkharadēva (A.D. 1268-1312).[69] Issued in his 40th regnal year, the record gives astronomical details equivalent to March 18, A. D. 1308. It deals with a gift of land to the deity, Tiruvārūruḍaiyār by an individual Vēḷān Kongil-piḷḷaiyān. Neither in the names of the administrative divisions, nor in the details contained in the record itself, any change is noticeable though the monarch belonged to a different dynasty. Perhaps political patronage helps a society and a temple prosper, but political changes do not affect them much.

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66. புனல் வகைச் சோழ பாண்டியன் மண்டலத்திறை கொண்ட பசும்பொன்னு மிறையிலியுமெயிற் புலியூர் ஆடும் . . . . கங்கிளிக்கும் பைம்பொன் மதுள் திருவாரூர் வானவர்குந் திரிபுவனவிரிச்சுரம் குந்தவர்கும் . . . .
-- Inscriptions of Pudukkottai State, Nos. 163 & 166

67. 557 of 1904; *S. I. I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 602.

68. 555 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 600.

69. 551 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 596

The other Pāṇdya inscription also registers a gift of land to the temple by an individual. Dated in the 35th regnal year of Māṛavarman Śrī Vallabha (accn. A.D. 1307), it gives details of date corresponding to August 7, A. D. 1342.[70]

There is a gap of almost a century between the above Pāṇḍya inscription and the next record to be found here. On the north wall of the *maṇḍapa* in front of the Achalēśvara shrine an inscription is found giving the details of date equivalent to 22nd February A.D. 1429. It records a decree for the merchants (*vāṇikar*) issued by the Vijayanagar ruler Vīra-Bhūp ati Uḍaiyār.[71]

The next record, assignable to 22nd September, A.D. 1440, found at the entrance into the western *gōpura* of the second *prākāra* records the erection of the *gōpura* by Nāgaraśar for the merit of [*Dakṣiṇasamudrādhipati*] Lakkaṇṇa Daṇṇāyaka.[72] A Kannaḍa copy of this Tamil inscription is found on the left side of the entrance of the *gōpura*.[73] While the title *Dakṣiṇasamudrādhipati* is found intact in the Kannaḍa version, it is found damaged in the Tamil record, which is obviously due to some local unfriendly feeling towards this able general, Lakkaṇṇa Daṇṇāyaka of the period of the Vijayanagar king Dēvarāya II (A.D. 1422–1446).

A damaged record of Achyutappa Nāyaka, the Nāyaka ruler of Tañjavūr (A.D. 1572–1600), who seems to have made some grants to the temple is found on a slab built into the floor of the first *prākāra*.[74] Raghunātha Nāyaka, another ruler of the Nāyaka dynasty of Tañjāvūr (A.D. 1600–1634), figures in a copper plate preserved in the temple. A chief at Sāttanguḍi, granted lands to the temple on behalf of the ruler in Śaka 1506 (A.D. 1584).[75]

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70. 539 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII. No. 584.
71. 575 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 621.
72. 566 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 611.
73. 567 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 612 See T. V. Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*, pp 33-4.
74. 536 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 581. The date appears to be irregular since Acyutappa Nayaka ruled from 1572 to 1600. But other details contained in the inscription regarding the Nayak ruler are correct.
75. 14 of 1946-47 (copper-plates). Here also the date appears to be irregular, since Raghunatha Nayaka ruled between A. D. 1600 and 1634.

The Mahrāṭṭa king, Sarfōji of Tañjāvūr carried out the renovation of the temple and performed a *kumbhābhisēka* on April 12, A.D. 1717, as recorded in an inscription on a slab built into the floor of the first *prākāra*, north of the Tyāgarāja shrine.[76] In two copper-plates, preserved in the temple, which are assignable to the period of the Mahrāṭṭas of Tañjāvūr, an individual Agōraśiva Paṇḍāram, is said to have received the grants made to the temple.[77] This individual was in charge of the temple administration for a long period during the Mahrāṭṭa rule. He was also closely connected with the administration of the Chidambaram temple. A portrait now found in the northern *gōpura* of the second *prākāra* of the temple, is believed to be that of Agōraśiva Paṇḍāram.

After the Mahrāṭṭa records, no inscriptions or copper-plates bearing on the temple are found, with the exception of the East India Company documents of the 18th century, which prove that the properties of the temple were under the care of the Company during the troubled period of the end of the 18th century when the native principalities were showing signs of decay and disruption.

Throughout its long history, Tiruvārūr temple has commanded high esteem among the followers of the faith that is not meted out to most other living temples: its functions as a religious institution were never interrupted and festivals seem to have been regularly conducted without any break.

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76. 535 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 580.
77. 16 and 18 of 1946-47 (copper-plates).

THE TEMPLE AND SOCIETY THROUGH INSCRIPTIONS

Stone inscriptions found on the walls of South Indian temples constitute the major source for the construction of the history of South India. While the historical information has to be sifted from many inscriptions and complementary and supplementary evidences have to be sought for from various records, the inscriptions supply ample data regarding the social and economic conditions of contemporary life. The temple inscriptions are unique in the sense that they record in detail everything connected with the registering of grants to temples. So a careful study of the records will give an authentic picture of the contemporary society in all its aspects. Poor though they are in providing historical information, the Tiruvārūr inscriptions are rich with valuable data which are of great help in comprehending the functions of the medieval temple and the texture of the contemporary society.

Almost all the inscriptions from the temple are donative, with only a few exceptions, which proclaim royal orders relating to the administration of the temple, or adjudication of disputes concerning it. Donations and gifts to the temple seem to have been very common, and in course of time, they seem to have become a must for the society. Here lies the secret of the growth of the temple as a strong institution during the medieval days. While its religious significance was growing along with the devotees' zeal for material offerings, accumulation of properties must have automatically contributed to its importance as a social centre with the halo of divine association. So it is not surprising that the South Indian temple fostered under its divine shade a remarkable administrative machinery, which grew parallel to the local self-governing institutions. In this connection the South Indian temple stands in noble contrast to the religious institutions of medieval Europe, where the growth of theocracy *vis-a-vis* the growth of society was not a happy one.

An idea of the relation between the laity and the temple may be gathered from the gifts made over to the temple. All sections of

the society, from the common individual, through the rich merchant to the king, patronised the temple commensurate with their ability.

The most common of the gifts is the provision of lamps. Often they are perpetual lamps (*nandā viḷakku*) to be burnt in the shrine of a particular deity. In the 20th regnal year of a Rājakēsari (Āditya I) an individual gave three *vēlis* of land to the shrine of Araneṛi (Achalēś-vara), for burning two perpetual lamps. [1] The land donated stood like a trust property in the hands of the village assembly (*ūravar*), who were bound to supply oil required for the lamps against the income accruing from the land. Another record assignable to the tenth century registers the gift of a perpetual lamp for the same shrine. Here the principal amount was given in gold: the local assembly of Tiruvārūr received thirty *kaḷañju* of gold from an individual for the purpose. [2] Such trust-forming method seems to have worked well, enabling the pious activities instituted by the donors to last for a long time. The above two records assignable to the 9th-10th centuries, are found re-engraved on a later structure, in characters assignable to the 12th century. The fact that they were carefully re-engraved after a lapse of nearly three centuries, shows that the noble object of the trust was carried out for a long time subsequently, without any break.

Sheep were often donated to the shrine for burning a perpetual lamp. Often the animals were entrusted to the care of another individual (mostly a shepherd) by the donor, so that the former and his progeny might maintain the lamp. In the record itself such an agreement was made and assurance given. Such an instance is provided by an inscription assignable to the eleventh century, wherein ninety-six 'immortal' sheep (*sāvā mūvāppērāḍu*) were entrusted to the care of one Nimandakkāran Aḍigaḷ Paṇḍitan by an individual Nārāyaṇa Śinga-ḷattaraiyan for burning a perpetual lamp in the shrine of Mūlasthāna-muḍaiyār. [3] The term "immortal" has to be interpreted as the

1. 572 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 291.
2. 574 of 1904.
3. 672 of 1919; for other grants made for perpetual lamps in the temple: 537, 552 and 556 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, Nos. 582, 597 and 601.

offspring of the animals donated, for they would be useful in future for fullfilling the object of the gift. Whatever may be the capital invested, land, gold or cattle, the permanance of the pious deed was stressed upon, and this fact reflects the sincere motives behind such acts. Otherwise such a gift would not have been operative by the burning of a lamp for centuries.

Various other small gifts were also donated to the temple. One inscription records the gift of silver vessels to Tiruvaraneṟi Āḻvār (Achalēśvara) for keeping food offerings to the god during daily services. [4] They included a silver plate and two silver pots, and their weight is also given in the record along with the description. Sums were paid for maintaining and renovating some shrines. A record registers a gift of 234 gold coins, equivalent to 200 *kaḻañju* as *pudukkuppuṟam* (capital fund for renovation) for the Achalēśvara shrine. The *sabhā* of Aḍiyap-piya-chaturvēdimaṅgalam undertook to be in charge of the endowment and agreed to provide the temple thirty *kaḻañju* per annum, from the interest (*poli*) accruing from the fund. [5]

Provision was also made for bathing the deity during the daily services, [6] and also on special occasions like festivals. Rājēndra I made special gifts to the temple for bathing the deity with scented water on the birth days of himself and his illustrious father Rājarāja I. [7] An individual made provisions for oil baths for Śrī Mūlasthānamuḍaiyār every Wednesday and Saturday. [8] Pieces of cloth were provided as a separate gift, for the canopy over the place where the deity was bathed and for covering the pots containing water for *abhiseka* during special occasions. [9]

Apart from the usual services conducted in the temple, special services were also instituted by the donors, and lands were given to the

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4. 570 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XIII, No. 1.
5. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 617.
6. 671 of 1919.
7. 674 of 1919.
8. 678 of 1919. It is interesting to remember that even now it is the custom of the Hindus to take oil baths on Wednesday and Saturday.
9. திருமஞ்சன சாலேக்கு திருமேற்கட்டி கட்ட புடவைக்கும்
திருமஞ்சனக் குடத்தின் மேல் நீர் மூடு புடவைக்கும் -- 673 of 1919.

temple for maintaining those services. As food offerings (*tiruvamudu*) were separately provided for, these grants must have been intended for meeting the expenses of the services alone. One record registers the gift of lands to the temple for conducting *Naḍuvil Rājēndran śandhi* for Śri Mūlasthānamuḍaiyār.[10] Arrangements for the supply of fresh flowers to the temple were made and lands were donated both for meeting the cost of the flowers and for raising special gardens to supply a particular variety of flowers. For raising and supplying the lily flowers (*Śeṅgaḷunīr*) lands were donated and they were called *śengaḷunīr tiruppaḷḷittāmam*.[11] A whole flower garden (*nandavanam*) was earmarked for *damanaka* flowers and granted to the temple.[12]

It was considered holy to feed *śivayōgis* at the temple and, land and gold were donated for the same purpose, so that the dishes may be prepared at the temple and served to the holymen. One record registers the gift of land to the temple by Śembian Mūvēndavēḷān for feeding daily twelve *śivayōgis* in the temple.[13] The inscription clearly specifies the required provisions of firewood, rice and pepper for preparing dishes for twelve persons a day. Brahmans were also regularly fed in the temple and one of the inscriptions registering the grant for feeding Brahmans, refers to the provision for feeding ten local Brahmans and ten brahmans who came to Tiruvārūr as pilgrims (*apūrvigaḷ*), on *amāvāsya* days.[14] An instance of the grant for Vedic recitals in the temple is provided by a record, wherein it is said that an individual granted land to the temple for *adhyayana* once daily by eight persons.[15]

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10. 534 of 1904.
11. 552, 553 and 564 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, Nos. 597, 598 & 609.
12. 553 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 598.
13. 677 of 1919.
14. இவ்வுள்ளூர் பிராமணர் பத்து கலமும்
    அபூர்விகள் வந்த பிராமணர் பத்து கலமும் . . . . .
    - - 562 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 607.

    The suggestion that the term *apurvigal* refers to those who specialise in the study and recital of *apurvas*, is not acceptable. (*S.I.I.*, vol. III, p. 233, n. 2). For in the Tiruvarur inscription quoted above clear distinction is made between the local brahmans and the visiting brahmans, respectively through the words *ullur* and *apurvi*.
15. 539 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 584.

Larger grants enabled the temple to enlarge its size through numerous structural additions and to fill its coffers with gold and by the revenue through large tracts of land. Setting up of images, both icons and portraits, and making provision for offerings to them were among the larger gifts made to the temple.

During the reign of Rājarāja I, Śembiyan Mahādēvi set up two icons, presumably in bronze, in the Achalēśvara shrine, and endowed gold for daily offerings to the images.[16] The icons were given the names Amarasundaradēva and Umā Bhaṭṭāraki. A grant of land was made for offerings to the image of Paralōka-menmoḷi Nācciyār, installed in the shrine of the goddess in the temple, by Vēdavanamuḍaiyān Ammaiyappan Pallavarāyan, a high official during the reign of Rājādhirāja II.[17] Portraits of semi-divine personages were also set up in the temple. In the seventh regnal year of Kulōttuṅga II, images of Ñānasambandar, Appar, Sundaramūrti and Paravai Nācciyār (Sundaramūrti's consort) were set up in the temple, and lands and gold were donated by the king for daily offerings and for special offerings and *abhiśēka* to them during festivals.[18] From an inscription of Rājādhirāja I, it is known that portraits of Rājēndra I and Paravai Nangaiyār, a dancing girl of Tiruvārūr were installed in the temple and that offerings were made to them.[19]

Erection of new shrines and *manḍapas*, and conversion of brick structures into stone structures were also effected by pious zeal. Śembiyan Mahādēvi rebuilt the Achalēśvara shrine as a stone structure[20] and

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16. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, 617.
17. 540 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 585.
18. . . . . . ஸ்ரீ மூலஸ்தானமுடையார் கோயிலில் எழுந்தருளியிருக்கும் ஆளுடைய நம்பிக்கும் பறவை நாச்சியார்க்கும் . . . . . இக்கோயிலில் எழுந்தருளியிருக்கும் ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையார்க்கும் திருநாவுக்கரசு தேவர்க்கும்.
    - - 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 485, *11.* 4 and 11.
19. 679 of 1919; also *supra* p. 53.
20. திருவறநெறி ஆழ்வார் கோயில் திருக்கற்றளி எழுந்தருளிவிச்ச உடைய பிராட்டியார் ஸ்ரீ செம்பியன் மகா தேவியார் . . . . .
    - - 571 of 1904; *S.I.I*, vol. XVII, No. 617, *1.*2

    The original shrine dates from the period of Aditya I, as evidenced by a re-engraved inscription found at the shrine. *supra*, p. 46.

Paravai Nangai built a new *maṇḍapa* called *Rājēndrasōḷañ*.[21] Another record refers to the construction of a new shrine for Gaṇapati, whose name is given as Tirukkuniṛainda Vināyakappiḷḷaiyār on the western bank of the temple tank.[22] Gilding parts of the shrine with precious metals was one of the costliest endowments to the temple. Nangai Paravai lavished twenty thousand six hundred and forty-three *kaḷañju* of gold on the *śikhara* of the Tyāgarāja shrine and also plated the doors of the shrine and the pillars of the *maṇḍapa* with forty-two thouand *palams* of copper.[23] Considering the value of the land during the contemporary period,[24] the magnitude of the donation is staggering, which was more than equal to the value of many villages granted to the temple put together. She also donated twenty-eight huge brass lamps, the total weight of which is given as fifteen thousand five hundred and seventy-nine *palams*.[25]

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21. 679 of 1919. Paravai Nangai also instituted a separate fund for the maintenance of the same structure.
22. 550 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 595.
23. 680 of 1919.
24. *Infra*. p. 103.
25. Apart from converting the Tyagaraja shrine from a brick structure into a stone shrine, gilding and plating the various parts of the shrine, erecting a new *mandapa* and endowing numerous lamps and vessels to the temple, Paravai Nangai gave lands for feeding brahmans with *uttamagram* (sumptuous meal) and gifted numerous ornaments weighing thousands of *kalanjus*; the ornaments consisted along with gold, 428 pearls, 7 rubies and 36 diamonds. She also erected two images (presumably *pavaivilakku*) in the shrine of Tyagaraja, which are referred to in the inscription as Paccaippavai Umainangai and Pavaisariyamulainangai. This pious lady, who commanded great affection from Rajendra I, seems to have equalled Sembiyan Mahadevi in her noble disposition, considering the sweeping range and the enormous value of her endowment to the temple. As those of an individual donor, her contributions to the Tiruvarur temple is the largest. (Even the total value of the large village grants of Kulottunga II, vide ?69 of 1901 seems to be less than the value of the Nangai endowments). It seems that she died during the reign of Rajadhiraja I, for during his reign grants were made at Tiruvarur for offerings to her image along with that of Rajendra I (679 of 1919). Similar grants were made for her image at the Paravai Isvaramudaiyar temple at Panaiyavaram, as revealed by an inscription at the same temple, assignable to the period of Rajadhiraja I (320 of 1917).

    See also 679 and 680 of 1919; *Supra*, pp. 50-3; for description of ornaments *infra*. pp. 105-6.

One of the inscriptions bearing three regnal years of Rājēndra III, the 13th, 20th and 23rd, refers to the erection of three shrines, respectively for Porpaḍikkanāyaka Īśvaramuḍaiyār, Tirumāḷigai Vināyakappiḷḷaiyār and Subramaṇṇiyappiḷḷaiyār, by four individuals. The shrines were erected in Rājākkaḷ-tambirān-tiruvīdi in Tiruvārūr, according to the inscription.[26]

Large village grants were also made to the temple, for celebrating festivals, meeting the establishment charges and for daily services. Kulōttunga II ordered the clubbing of large tracts of lands from four villages to form two new villages. The newly formed villages were then exempted from taxes, and made over to the temple for celebrating specific festivals in the temple and for paying the wages of the temple servants.[27] Thus lands from Tiruvādiraimangalam and Āmūr were pooled together to form Anapāyanallūr,[28] and out of huge chunks from Gangaikoṇḍaśōḷanallūr and Arangamangalam emerged Dānavinōdanallūr.

The inscriptions also contain specific names given to various structures in the temple. The two large *maṇḍapas* of the temple, the Dēvāśriyan[29] and Rājanārāyaṇan-tirumaṇḍapam,[30] are referred to in the inscriptions by the same names. But it is not possible now to identify the other structures named in the records, which describe the meetings of the village assemblies held in the Kongavāḷar–tirumaṇḍapam[31] and the

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26. 557 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 602.
S. Dhandapani Desikar's suggestion that the name Porpadikkanayaka Isvaram is the Tamil equivalent of Atakesvaram is not correct, as the record specifically states that the shrine was built at the southern half of the Rajakkal-tambiran street in Tiruvarur. Atakesvaram is situated in the second *prakara* within the temple-complex.
Tiruvarur, 'Kalvettukkal' (ch. on inscriptions), p. 92.
27. 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 485.
28. Villages donated to temples at many places by Kulottunga were named as Anapayanallur.
K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas*, p. 349. Anapaya is the most important of the titles of Kulottunga II, *Supra*, p. 58.
29. 541, 553 and 561 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, Nos. 586, 598 and 606.
30. 563 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 608.
31. 671 of 1919.

Rājēndrasōlan Attāṇi.[32] None of the present structures like *Tiruppaḷḷit-tāmamaṇḍapam*, *Ūñjal-maṇḍapam* and *Vasanta-maṇḍapam* can be identified with them as these are late constructions. However the *Sabhā-pati-maṇḍapam* seems to retain its name given during the twelfth century.[33] The *gōpura* of the first *prākāra* seems to have been designated by the name *Aṇukkantiruvāyil*.[34] The Dēvi shrines are not found referred to in the inscriptions by the present names of the Goddess, Nīlōtpalāmbāḷ and Kamalāmbāḷ, but as the shrines of Vīdiviṭankadēvar Nambirāṭṭiyār[35] and Ulaguyyakkoṇḍa Kāmakkōṭṭam.[36] But the names cannot be easily identified with the respective Dēvis. However, the existence of two Dēvi shrines within the temple complex during the twelfth century is attested to by an inscription dated in the tenth regnal year of Rājādhirāja II, which refers to the shrine of the senior Dēvi (*kāmakkōṭṭamuḍaiya periya nācciyār kōyilil*).[37]

The inscriptions by way of recording the administrative procedures regarding the execution of the pious activities of the donors, reveal the wealth of the temple, structure of the temple administration, details

32. 679 of 1919; 560 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 605. The structure was raised by Nangai Paravai in honour of Rajendra I.
33. *supra*, p. 67.
34. 675 of 1919.
35. In a verse found appended to the inscription, which is composed in the *venba* metre, the donor says that he had gifted wreath of precious stones to the goddess whose name is given as Sivakamasundari, consort of Arur Vidivitankaperuman. However in the 27th line of the record which is in prose form the Devi is referred to as Vidivitankadevar Nambirattiyar.

    . . . . . . பொன்னார மணி ஆரம் பூட்டினான் மின்னாரும்
    திங்கையார் வேல் செய்யபாதம் செழுமுகில்போல்
    வண் கையானகமாக கையாரமன்
    மெம்புகழ் ஆரூர் வீதிவிடங்க பெருமான் பெதேவி சிவகாம
    சுந்தரிக்கு வாகி அணிதருமாக்களூர் மன் செய்யபாதம் மணி
    ஆரம் பூட்டினான் . . . . . .

    676 of 1919.
36. 541 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 586.
37. 540 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 585.

    It is interesting to find that Tirunanasambandar in one of his hymns on Tiruvarur temple, refers to Alliyangodai, which is the Tamil equivalent of Nilotpalambal, whose shrine is situated in the second *prakara*.
    -- *Tevaram*, 1:105:9. Also *supra*, p.18.

regarding its establishment, its connections with the local village assembly and the management of its properties.

The temple possessed vast areas of cultivable lands distributed in many villages some time far away from Tiruvārūr. Many villages seem to have been made completely tax-free and gifted to the temple. Within a radius of about twelve miles from Tiruvārūr there were many villages under the possession of the temple. Some of them retain their names as found in the inscriptions, even to this day. Vēlangudi,[38] Tīyangudi,[39] Paḷanakkuḍi,[40] Pudukkdi,[41] Vāyarrūr,[42] Pulivalam[43] and Tirunallūr[44] were some of the villages where the Tiruvārūr temple owned large tracts of lands.[45] As grants for conducting daily as also special services, during festivals, whole villages were gifted to the temple as *arcenābhoga iraiyili.*[46] Ammaiyappan, now a small village where the Tiruvārūr temple owns at present only few acres, one almost wholly belonged to the temple, as borne out by the fact that a sum of 1500 *kāśu* was paid to the village assembly by the donor for making it *iraiyili*, before granting it to the temple.[47]

While gold was received either in lumps or coins directly by the temple, the method adopted to manage the gifted lands shows the forethought of the people, who wished nothing but smooth and flawless functioning of the administration of the temple: gifted lands were often taken care of by the donors themselves, who were bound, by the agreement spelt out in the records, to hand over the output to the temple for

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38. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 617.
39. 677 of 1919.
40. 544 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 589.
41. 541 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 586.
42. 562 of 1904; *S. I. I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 607.
43. 560 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 605.
44. 563 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 608
45. Almost all the donated lands were wet lands, raising paddy and grant of dry lands raising cash crops or millets is conspicuous by its absence. Wherever other grains were needed for provisions, paddy equivalent to their value was earmarked for acquiring them.
    269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII No. 485.
46. *Ibid.*
47. 542 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII. No. 587.

carrying out the instituted deed. At times the capital, both lands and gold, was entrusted to a third party to manage cultivation or to act as a banker, handing over the produce or interest (*poli*) to the temple. In many instances village assemblies of the respective villages whence the donors hailed, took charge of the execution of the endowments.

In one of the records the gifted land was let out on lease so that the produce annually given to the temple might form the capital for the endowment.[48] In the 32nd regnal year of Parāntaka I, the *sabhā* of Pandaṇainallūrkūrram undertook to provide oil for a perpetual lamp for god Śrī Ārūrttiru Araneṛi Mahādēva, out of the interest from 30 *kaḷañju* of gold endowed for that purpose by an individual.[49] The members of the *mahāsabhā* of Tirunallūr came to Tiruvārūr and assembling at the *Dēvāśriyan maṇḍapam* announced to the temple representatives their willingness to exempt a piece of gifted land in their village from taxes, and unamimously declared that they made the grant on behalf of Madurāntakan Poṉṉambalakkūttan *alias* Poṛkōyil Toṇḍaimāṉār, from whom they received earlier, 100 *kāśu*.[50] Again a group of *brāhmans* (*Śivabrāhmaṇas*) received 17 *kāśu* for a perpetual lamp in the temple from a horse-dealer and assured to carry out the deed.[51] The amount was deposited with the representatives of the Brāhmans, holding leases in the temple, who agreed to contribute the required oil for the lamp. The temple was rich in material possession and at the same time relieved of the strain of administering vast tracts of land distributed over a wide area and of maintaining varying amounts of money intended for different purposes. This stands in striking contrast to many a modern religious institution with enormous wealth under its direct control and has also many skeletons up in its cupboard, dealing with numerous problems of managing them. Perhaps the more pious and sincere support of the laity in those days also contributed to the smooth functioning of the management of the temple concerning its revenue and expenditure.

The temple had its own treasury which was known as *paṇḍāram*.[52] The village assembly of Aḍiyappiyaccaturvēdimaṅgalam received from the

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48. 671 of 1919.
49. 573 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 619.
50. 564 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol XVII, No. 609.
51. 556 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 601.
52. 680 of 1919.

temple *paṇḍāram*, 200 *kaḷañju* of gold which was earlier deposited by Śembiyan Mahādēvi for food offerings to the deity.[53] Individual donors, who had to pay specified sums to the village assemblies, for getting their endowments exempted from taxes, paid the money to the temple treasury, which would be later transferred to the governing bodies.[54] The temple treasury which was known generally as *Śrī Paṇḍāram*, was also known by specific names. *Tyāgavinōdan Pañḍāram*, was the name, given to the temple treasury during the reign of Kulōttunga I.[55] It seems that the treasury kept the money with itself in a few instances only. On most occasions, the donated amount was subsequently deposited with willing individuals, groups or village assemblies.[56] Thus the distribution of money for various grants which were not uniform in nature was made possible and the strain of the calculation of interest the spending of it and maintenance of accounts for them was minimised. That the temple treasury had its own records is attested to by an inscription which refers to the *paṇḍārappottagam*, while registering a grant of sheep for perpetual lamps.[57]

The temple had its own officials for the administration of temple properties. While the *dēvakanmis*[58] who are often referred to in the records as receiving grants on behalf of Caṇḍēśvara,[59] the names of the officials connected with the temple are separately given. The *Śrīkāryam* seems to have been connected more with the religious side of the administration, though his powers might have had wider scope.[60] But two other officials, *ārāycci* and *mēnāyakam*, must have been vested with the functions of managing the temple properties. One record gives the name of the

53. 571 of 1904; *S. I. I.*, vol. XVII, No. 617.
54. 677 of 1919; 563 and 564 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, Nos. 608 and 609.
55. 541 of 1919; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 586.
56. 673 of 1919.
57. 672 of 1919
58. 568 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 613.
59. 538 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, XVII, No. 583.
60. 563 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 613.

ārāycci connected with the Acalēśvara shrine as Munaippāḍi Uḍaiyān.[61] This individual seems to have been concerned with the accounts of the temple and the proper use of the temple property. Another inscription registers a grant of provisions for food offerings to the deity, which was supervised by Ambarnāṭṭukkōn Mēnāyakam.[62] Officials like *kaṇkāṇi* and *karaṇattān* also figure in a record assignable to the first quarter of the fourteenth century.[63]

The administrative procedures adopted by the temple were well organised and from large grants down to humble donations they were scrupulously followed. While lands were donated, their exact location in a village, giving the boundaries of the pieces on all the four sides, was recorded in the inscription.[64] The rights for freely irrigating the fields were made over to the temple and presumably to whomsoever the lands were subsequently assigned by the temple ;[65] rights of enjoying the yield of the trees grown on the fields and using any well within the boundaries were also reserved to the temple.[66] The donor seems to have been required to renounce all the claims on the endowed lands. When a sale or purchase was concluded, the party relieved of the property in question firmly assured the other in all the records in identically comprehensive

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61. 572 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XIII, No. 291. One of the records found in the Kalyanasundaresvara temple at Nallur and dated in the 10th regnal year of Uttama Cola refers to an officer called *araycci*, who was deputed by the king to check the accounts of the temple at Tirunallur. 41 of 1911; *S I I.*, vol. III, No. 136.

62. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 617.

63. 551 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 596.

64. .... இராஜ விச்சாதிர வாய்க்காலுக்குத் தென்பக்கத்து ஆயப் பெரை ஓடையென்று பேர் கூவப்பட்ட நிலத்துக்கு கீழ்ப்பாற்கெல்லை . . பட்டன் நிலத்துக்கு மேற்கும் . . . பொன்னம்பி பட்டன் நிலத்துக்கு உள்ளிட்டார் நிலத்துக்கு வடக்கும் பூஷண பட்டன் நிலத்துக்கு கிழக்கும் . . . வாய்க்காலுக்கு தெற்கும் நடுவுபட்ட நிலம் . . .
-- 555 of 1904 ; *S.I.I.* vol. XVII, No. 600.

65. .... இந்நிலத்துக்கு முன்பு நீர்பாவு மண்ணமேய் பாயவும் நீர் வாருமிடத்திலெ வாரவும் வடசெரிக்குளத்திலெ இறைக்கப் பெருவதாகவும் , . . .
-- 671 of 1919.

66. 564 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 609.

terms[67] that thereafter no deed or document would be produced on the property and that one reached during the disposal would ultimately be the binding document.

Technical terms relating to the sale, transfer, purchase and auction are also found used widely in the records. Poruḷmāvaṛudi[68] and *nilavilai-yāvaṇam*[69] meant respectively price-deed and sale-deed. *Peruvilai* seems to be the term designating auction. Particular auctions were given distinguishing names. For instance, a record dated in the second regnal year of Rājādhirāja II, registers a gift of land by Vēdavanamudaiyān Ammaiyappan who purchased it from an individual for *Rājādhirāja-peruvilai.*[70]

Certain other terms indicated the types of grants according to the purpose for which they were made. Thus *maḍappuṛam* denoted the lands allotted for the maintenance of religious and charitable institutions ;[71] *Tiruppudiyūṭṭkkāṇi* meant pieces of land solely devoted for the fresh offerings to the deities ;[72] the term *arcanābhōga iṛaiyili* referred to the tax-free lands donated for conducting daily services in the temple.[73] As found earlier, *pudukkuppuṛam*[74] was the name given to the lands and sums intended for the maintenance and renovations of structures within the temple. Lands allotted for burning lamps in the temple were called *tiruviḷakkuppuṛam.*[75]

The prosperity of the temple depended much on the co-operation of the local bodies and the Tiruvārūr temple, in the medieval period,

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67. . . . . இடுவெய் பொருள் மாவறுதிப் பொருட் செலவோலை ஆவதாகவும் இதுல்லாது வேறு பொருள் மாவறுதிப் பொருட் செலவோலை காட்டக் கடவாரல்லாதாராகவும் . . . . . .
- - 526 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 607.
68. 563 of 1904; *S.I.I.* vol. XVII, No. 608.
69. 564 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 609.
70. 538 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, XVII, No. 583.
71. 671 of 1919; 164 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, vol. V, No. 457.
72. 538 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 583.
73. 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 485.
74. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.* vol. XVII, No. 617; 679 of 1919.
75. 559 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 604.

seems to have received the whole-hearted support of not only the local governing body of Tiruvārūr but also that of the village-assemblies of the surrounding places. The respective *sabhās* and *ūrs* of Pandaṇainallūr, 76 Aḍiyappiyaccadurvēdimangalam, 77 Vēlanguḍi, 78 Pudukkuḍi, 79 Vāyaṛṛūr, 80 Pulivalam, 81 Ilanguḍi, 82 Rājarājabrahmamangalam, 83 Naḍappūr 84 and Vāḷguḍi 85 readily made the lands donated to the temple tax-free, after receiving a nominal amount. As observed earlier many village-assemblies undertook the execution of pious deeds instituted by their respective residents.86 On several occasions members of the nearby village-assemblies came to Tiruvārūr and assembling at the temple resolved and executed in deed the proposals for exempting lands gifted to the temple from various taxes, due to them, from the respective pieces of lands. 87

Many *maṭhas* were functioning at Tiruvārūr, and they were closely associated with the temple, as evidenced by the inscriptions. In the 24th regnal year of Kulōttunga I, an individual named Paḷaiyārukiḻān Arumoḻi Rājēndraśōḻan deposited gold with the temple treasury for feeding holy men in a *maṭha* called Caṇḍēśvaran, situated in Tiruvārūr. 88 Another inscription dated in the third regnal year of Vikrama Cōḷa refers to a Tyāgavinōdan Śālai *maṭha*, as situated in Tiruvārūr.89 In the twentieth regnal year of Rājēndra III, one Pirambar Viśaiyapālar of Tiruviḍaimarudūr founded a *maṭha* at

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76. 573 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 619.
77. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 617.
78. 569 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 614.
79. 541 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 586.
80. 562 of 1904; *S I.I.*, vol. No. XVII, No 607.
81. 560 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. No. XVII, No. 605.
82. 164 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, vol. V, No. 457.
83. 553 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 598.
84. 552 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 597.
85. 557 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 602.
86. 572 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 291.
87. 671 of 1919 & 564 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 609.
88. 671 of 1919.
89. 562 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 607.

Tiruvārūr and donated lands for feeding in it, the *tapaśyar*, who were tending the gardens of the shrine of Poṟpaḍikka Nāyakīśvara.[90]

An interesting and peculiar feature, recorded in some of the inscriptions, is that some of the grants were ordered by the deity himself and they were subsequently carried out. In a long inscription dated in the fifth regnal year of Vikrama Cōḻa, the legend relating to Manunīti Cōḻa is narrated by Vīdiviṭankan when seated in the Dēvāśryan maṇḍapam.[91] He orders the restoration of the palace-site, once bestowed upon Manu's minister, to the latter's descendant, Pālaiyūruḍaiyān Candraśēkharan. Another record dated in the 13th regnal year of Kulōttunga III says that Tyāgarāja (Vīdiviṭankan) granted lands to the shrine of Tikkuniṟainda Piḷḷaiyār situated to the west of the temple.[92] While making the grant the deity speaks in "first person-plural", and it is interesting to note Tyāgarāja referring to Vināyaka as "Our son".[93] In the first line of the record, it is stated that the deity made the statement granting the land at the instance of *Tiruvāykkēḻvi* Tamiḻadaraiyan. In another record of the same king bearing his 24th regnal year, Tyāgarāja (*Pūrvārūrvāsi*) orders the redistribution of uncultivated lands among new ryots, who were serving in the temple.[94] In this inscription the deity refers to Kulōttunga as "our friend".[95]

Large provisions were made for conducting festivals in the temple and a remarkable inscription of Kulōttunga II gives a *rēsumē* of all the festivals, monthly and annual, conducted in the temple during a year.[96] Thus fifty-six festivals (*tirunāḷ*) are found listed in the inscriptions. Most important among them were (as they now are) the

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90. 555 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 600.
91. 163 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, vol. V, No. 455.
92. 550 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII', No. 595.
93. .... இப்படி நிவந்தமும் கட்டின படிக்கும் நம் பிள்ளைக்கு இரண்டு திருப்பரிசாரம் நட்டின பேர் ...
94. 554 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 599.
95. ... நம் தோழன் திரிபுவந வீரனுக்கு இருபத்து நாலாவது முதல் *Ibid.*
96. 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 485.

Tiruvādirai and *Panguni Uttiram*.[97] The *Panguni Uttiram* festival, as evidenced by the inscription, was celebrated for ten days in the temple.[98] During both the festivals, Tyāgarāja seems to have been taken out in procession.[99] Other important festivals included *Visuvayanam*, *Ādippūram*, *Āvaṇiyaviṭṭam* and *Cittirai Cittirai*. Two other festivals called *Damanagam śāttiyaruḷum tirunāḷ* and *Pavittiram śātti aruḷum tirunāḷ*, were also celebrated. These two are not known now and it may be suggested that the former related to the wearing of the Damanaka flower by the deity;[100] the significance of the latter is not known. *Aippaśi śatayam* and *Āḍi Ārdra* were celebrated respectively as the asterisms of Rājarāja I and Rājēndra I.[101] Other festivals included the twelve *amāvāsya* (new moon) and eight *sankarānti* days per year.

The same record gives information regarding the servants of the temple. By way of making grants for supplying cloth and additional allowances to them, the inscription describes the work allotted to each of them : torch-bearers, cooks, garland-makers, servants mixing incense, servants gathering flowers, servants supplying fire-wood to the temple-kitchen, women cleaning rice, conch-blowers, trumpeteers and servants carrying the deity in procession during festivals. Besides, potters and barbers were also paid.[102]

Grants were also made to support songsters in the temple and dramas seem to have been performed often in the *maṇḍapas*. In one record assignable to the 11th century, an individual is said to have given allowances to the songsters, who sang in the temple during festivals[103]

97. Now the *Panguni Uttiram* festival is celebrated for more than ten days and it is now called *Vasantotswam*.

98. திருப்பங்குனி உத்திரத் திருநாளைக்கு திருக்கொடி ஏற்றுக்கு . . . . திருநாள் பத்தும் . . . . - - *op. cit.*

99. திருப்பங்குனி உத்திரத் திருநாளைக்கு . . . . திருமுளைசார்த்த எழுந்தருளும் திருநாள் . . . - - *Ibid.*

100. 553 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol XVII, No. 598.

101. *supra*, p. 55.

102. 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 485. Also 677 of 1919.

103. . . . . இக்கோயில் பாஞ்சாரியர்க்கும், பாடுவார்க்கும், வாசிப் பார்க்கும் பொலிசைக்குக் குடுத்த காசு . . . . 678 of 1919.

The deity, Vīdiviṭankan is said to have witnessed the dance performance by Pungōyil Nāyakat–talaikkōli and granted tax–free lands to one Pūngōyil Nambi who composed *Vīraṇukkavijayam*, in honour of Vīraśōḷa Aṇukkar.[104] In the 49th regnal year of Kulōttunga I, the deity is again said to have witnessed another dance performance by Pukkatturai Vallavattalaikkōli at the *Dēvaśriyan Maṇḍapam*.[105] Another dancing girl called Tyāgavinōdattalaikkōli danced before Vīdiviṭankan on the occasion of *Cittirai Śatayam*, in the fifth regnal year of Vikrama Cōḷa.[106] One record refers to the *āṭṭattuveḷi* (open–air theatre) where the deity was taken in procession during *Taippūśam*.[107]

It is significant that the various names by which Tiruvārūr is mentioned in later works, like *Tiruvārūrkkōvai* are not found in the inscriptions.[108] In this regard the only exception is the name Kamalāpura

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104. 548 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 593.

Anukkar seem to have been a group of persons intended for immediate attendance on the king. This group might have originated during the period of Parantaka I, one of whose titles was *Virasolan*. The play referred to here might have sung the glory of this group of warriors.
-- *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, "Introduction", p. v.

105. 561 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 606.

106. 163 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, XVII, No. 455.

Talaikkoli is a title assumed by dancing women initiated into the profession (*Kalaikkalnjiyam*, vol. VII, p. 341). The *Silappadikaram* refers to this title as being conferred on Madavi by the king (III, ll. 318-20). Apart from the two dancing girls mentioned in the above two epigraphs, another record at Tiruvarur speaks of *Padiyilal (dasi)* Umaiyalvi *alias* Alagilumalagiya Devattalaikkoli. She was one of the *devadasis* (*padiyilar*) living as a group in the northern half of the Rajakkal tambiran tiruvidi at Tiruvarur. (555 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 600). The institution of the *devadasis* at Tiruvarur has a hoary antiquity. It dates from Paravai Nacciyar who is mentioned in the *Periyapuranam*, and the high esteem in which the dancing girls were held is known from the story of Paravai Nangai, the favourite of Rajendra I. During the Vijayanagara period many beautiful and accomplished dancing-girls were noticed at Tiruvarur by foreign travellers (See T. V. Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*, p. 269)

107. 550 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 595.

108. S. Dandapani Desikar, *Tiruvarurttala varalaru*, p. 55.

II's inscriptions.[109] In later inscriptions dating from the latter half of the 13th century, both in the Tiruvārūr inscriptions and inscriptions found in other places the name Selva Tiruvārūr sometimes occurs.[110]

The temple–tank, called Kamalālaya which is situated to the west of the temple is not mentioned in the inscriptions by that name. The temple tank is referred to only as *tīrthakuḷam*.[110a]

Names of some of the streets in Tiruvārūr, which however, do not survive now, are found in the inscriptions. In the inscriptions dated in the regnal years of Rājēndra III, *Rājākkaḷ tambirān tiruvīdi* and *Sannadhi tiruvīdi* are referred to.[111]

The peculiar practice of referring to various pieces of land by specific names which is followed even today in the villages of the Kāvēri Delta, seems to have been in vogue during ancient periods also. For names of various pieces of lands (which were not of any particular significance but given simply to distinguish each piece of land) are found in the inscriptions such as *tiruvāl*,[112] *pugaippodi*,[113] and *iraṭṭaikkuḷam*.[114] Small channels irrigating the lands were also given separate names such as *Rājēndrasōḻan–vāykkāl*[115] and *Rājarājan–vāykkāl*[116] etc.

Thanks to the meticulous and scrupulous recording of details followed in registering the grants, many facts relating to the customs and habits of contemporary society can be known from the inscriptions. Units of measurements, both linear and cubic, and weights, ornaments and food habits are given in the inscriptions.

Land was measured in terms of *kuḻi*, *mā*, *kāṇi*, and *vēli*. It is given in one record that 100 *kuḻis* formed one *mā* and 20 *mās* constituted

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109. 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 485.
110. 555 and 557 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, Nos. 600 & 601.
110a. 550 of 1904; *S. I. I.*, vol. XVII, No. 595.
111. 555 and 557 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, Nos. 600 and 601.
112. 557 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 601.
113. 555 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 600.
114. *Ibid.*
115. 563 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 608.
116. 553 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 598.

ond *vēli*.[117] While the actual value of any piece of land is not referred to in the inscriptions, instances of the amounts being paid for making lands tax-free are found in large numbers: 450 *kuḷis* were made tax-free for 3 *kaḷañju*;[118] only one inscription refers to the execution of sale-deed but unfortunately the area of land, which was sold for 100 *kāśu* equivalent to 32½ *kaḷañju* of gold, is not given in the record.[119]

Oil and ghee were measured in terms of *uḷakku* and *nāḷi*. In an inscription recorded in the eighth regnal year of Kulōttunga III, it was agreed by an individual to supply 273 *nāḷi* and 3 *uḷakku* of ghee for perpetual lamps in the temple, for one year, at the rate of 3 *uḷakku* per day.[120] Thus it can be derived that 4 *uḷakku* formed one *nāḷi*.

Kunṛi, *mañjāḍi*, and *kaḷañju* were the units of weights for gold, while the less precious metals like copper and brass were weighed in terms of *palam*.[121] The relation between the units was as follows: 5 *kunṛi* equalled one *mañjāḍi* and 20 *mañjāḍi* formed ond *kaḷañju*.

That there was no uniform system of currency is attested to by the fact that the weight of the donated coins was always given in terms of *kaḷañju*. In one inscription the weight of 100 *kāśu* is given as 32½ *kaḷañju*.

Though the cubic measures and other units of weights were universal,[123] the basic unit in each case was given a specific name, suggesting the prevalence of strict control of weights and measures. During the reigns of Āditya I and Parāntaka I, the locol standard measure (uḷakku) was called *Thirunīlakaṇṭam*.[124] In a record bearing the 8th regnal year of Vikrama cōḷa, the same measure was known as *Puṛṛiḍangoṇḍān*.[125] For

117. 164 of 1894; *S.I.I.*, vol V, No. 457.
118. 671 of 1919.
119. 563 of 1904; *S.I.I.*. vol. XVII, No. 608.
120. 537 of 1904; *S.I.I.* vol. XVII, No. 582.
121. 563 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 608
122. 563 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. No. XVII, No. 608.
123. A. Appadorai, *Economic Conditions in Southern India* (1000-1500 A.D.) - vol. II, pp. 782-5.
124. 572 and 573 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XIII, No. 291 and vol. XVII, No. 619.
125. 556 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 601.

weighing gold, the local standard weight was *Rājarājan nirai*[126] and *Rājarājan māḍai*[127] during the eleventh century; in the twelfth century the standard was known by the name *Tyāgavinōdan māḍai*.[128]

Through the gifts of numerous ornaments made to the temple during the reigns of Rājēndra I,[129] Rājādhirāja I,[130] and Rājēndra II,[131] names of many ornaments worn during the medieval period are known. In the inscription of Rājēndra I, Nangai Paravai is said to have donated 13 types of ornaments. Their names are given in the inscription along with the varieties of the precious stones fixed on them and their weights. The ornaments included *muttin vaḍam* (a neck ornament of single string), *śikhamaṇi* (worn on the head), *tāli* (worn around the neck), *iraṭṭai muttu vāḷi* (ear ornament), *vilāsu paṭṭigai* and *muttin paṭṭigai* (girdles) and *koḻandu*. The last one might have been derived from *koḻundu* and hence denoted the pendant.[132] *Bāhuvalayam* and *kaimmōdiram* were respectively worn on the upper arm and around the finger. Besides the ornaments golden flowers, set with pearls and other precious stones, called *kuruḍapū*, *kaḷḷippū* and *porpu* were also donated. The names of certain portions of the ornaments like *tāḷiyambam* (a part of the neck ornament) and *kokkuvāy* (hook), are also mentioned. Some ornaments, which became obsolete and for which there are no modern parallels, are also referred to as gifted to the temple. *Uḷḷuḷānakkam* and *tāḷkkūḍu* are among such ornaments. *Tāḷkkūḍu* might have been a casket-like ornament, loosely hung from the neck on the chest. Such casket-like necklaces containing votive objects are worn even today by some orthodox sects. Precious stones such as *muttu* (pearl), *māṇikkam* (ruby) and *maragadam* (emerald) are said to have studded the ornaments.

In the inscription of Kulōttunga II, which registers large provisions for offerings to the deities and the images of the three *nāyanārs* and Paravai Nācciyār, various names of dishes prepared in the temple for

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126. 670 of 1919.
127. 671 of 1919.
128. 541 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 586.
129. 680 of 1919.
130. 670 of 1919.
131. 669 of 1919.
132. R. Champakalakshmi, "Ornaments from Epigraphy", Paper read during the Seminar on Epigraphy organised by the Department of Archaeology, Government of Madras, October 1966 (in the press).

offerings are given.[133] *Pūri aval amudu, appamudu, kaṛiyamudu* (side-dish), *tayir amudu* (rice with curd), *pāl amudu* (rice with milk), *māngāy vaṛṛal* (mango condiment), *uppiñji* (seasoned ginger), *miḷagamudu* (rice with pepper), *neyyamudu* (rice with ghee), *porikkaṛiyamudu* (rice with fried vegetables) and *aḍaikkāyamudu* (betel leaves and nuts) were the chief items included in the offerings to the deity. *ponagappaḷam* was the name given to a fine variety of rice which was used for preparing choice dishes.[134]

The place of Tiruvārūr in the administrative divisions of various periods is also known from inscriptions. From the days of Parāntaka I, Tiruvārūr was classified as a *kūṛṛam,* consisting of many villages.[135] During Rājarāja's reign, the Tiruvārūr kūṛṛam is said to have been situated on the "south bank of the Kāvēri" (*Kāviri tenkarai tiruvārūr kūṛṛam*).[136] The location is thus given after a wide division of the Cōḷa empire into two portions, lying respectively to the north and south of the Kāvēri river. From the 23rd regnal year of Rājarāja I, the Tiruvārūr kūṛṛam was included in a newly-formed administrative division, Ksatriya-śikhāmaṇi vaḷanāḍu.[137] In the reign of Rājādhirāja I the name of the *vaḷanāḍu* was changed into Adhirājarāja *vaḷanāḍu.*[138] And again it was renamed as Gēyamāṇikka vaḷanāḍu in the period of Kulōttunga I.[139] Thereafter the name of the *vaḷanāḍu* remained unaltered and even in the Pāṇḍya records found in the temple, the larger administrative division in which Tiruvārūr was situated is referred to as Gēyamāṇikka vaḷanāḍu.[140]

As a great temple with hoary antiquity, the Tiruvārūr temple assumed an important position among the villages around Tiruvārūr and as a result, many grants were made to it, causing numerous valuable records to be engraved on its walls, thanks to which many facts relating to both the temple and society through the ages are now known.

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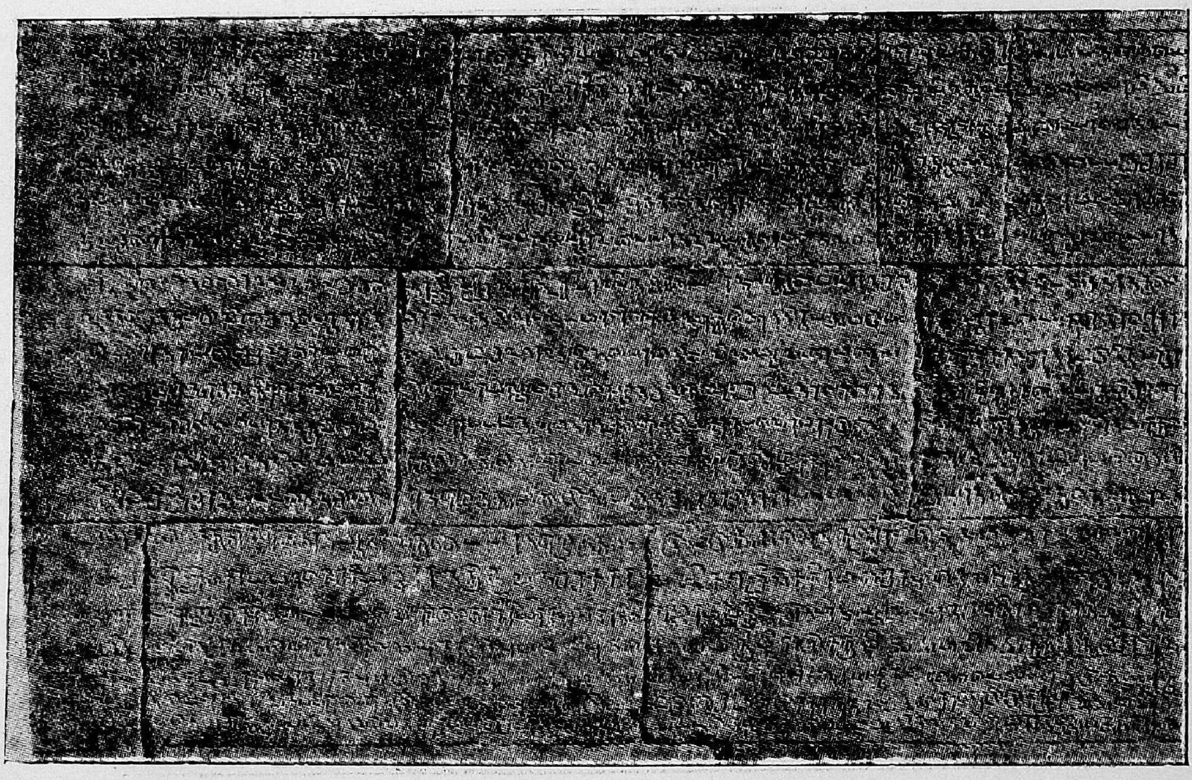
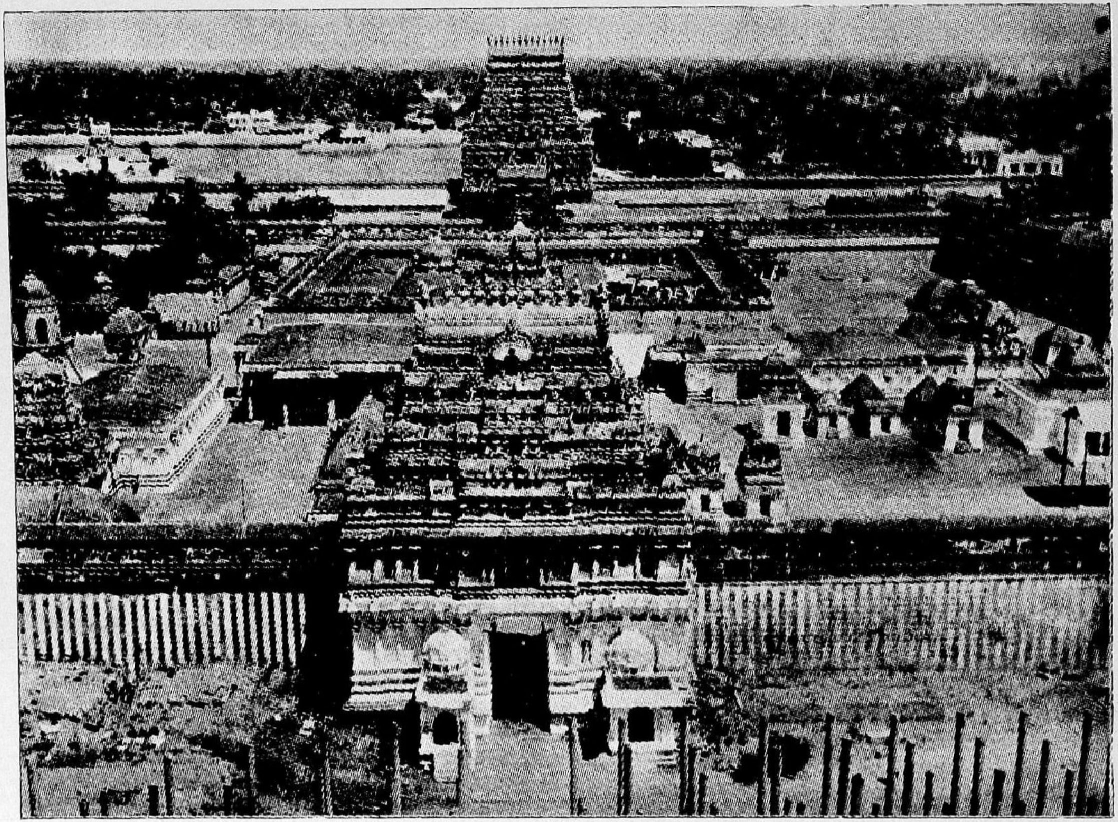
133. 269 of 1901; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 485.
134. 670 of 1919.
135. 573 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 619 and 574 of 1904.
136. 570 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. XVII, No. 1.
137. 569 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol. VII, No. 617.
138. 670 of 1919.
139. 533 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, vol XVII, No. 578.
140. 551 of 1904; *S.I.I.* vol. XVII, No. 596.

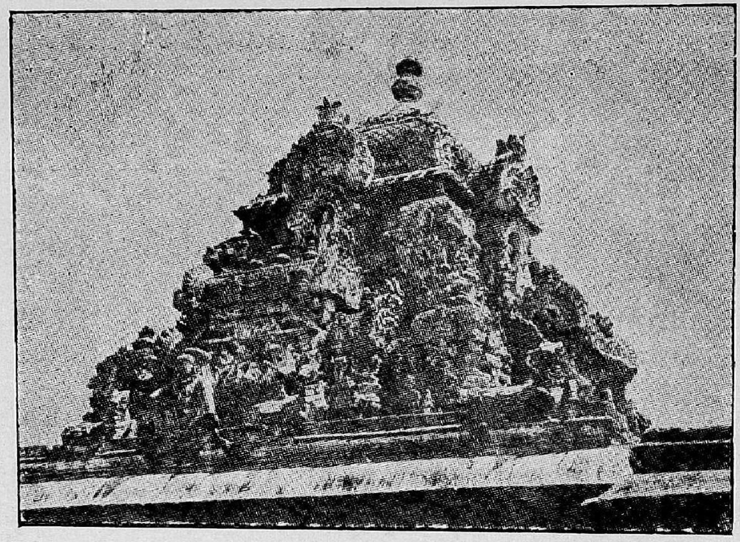
I. Sri Tyāgarājasvāmi.



2. Inscription of Vikrama Chōḷa containing the legend relating to Manunīti Chōḷa, south wall of the second prākāra.

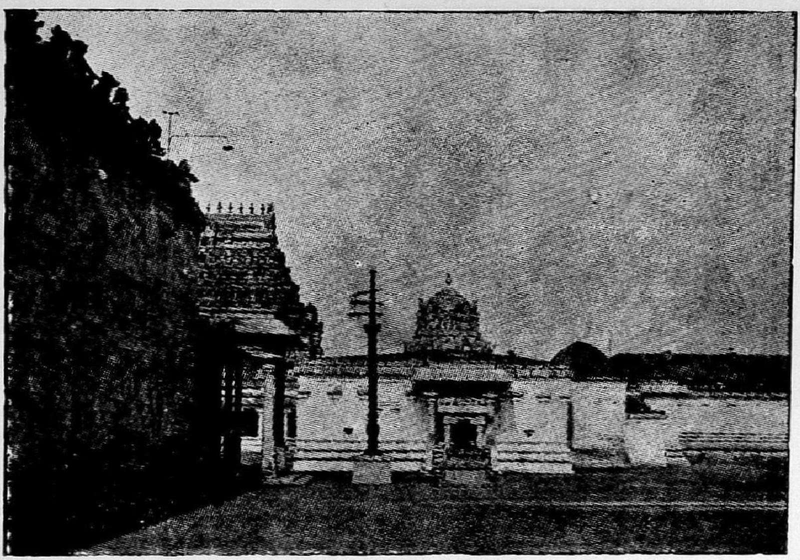


3. General view of the temple from east, with the eastern *gōpura* of the second *prākāra* in the foreground and the Kamalālayā in the background.

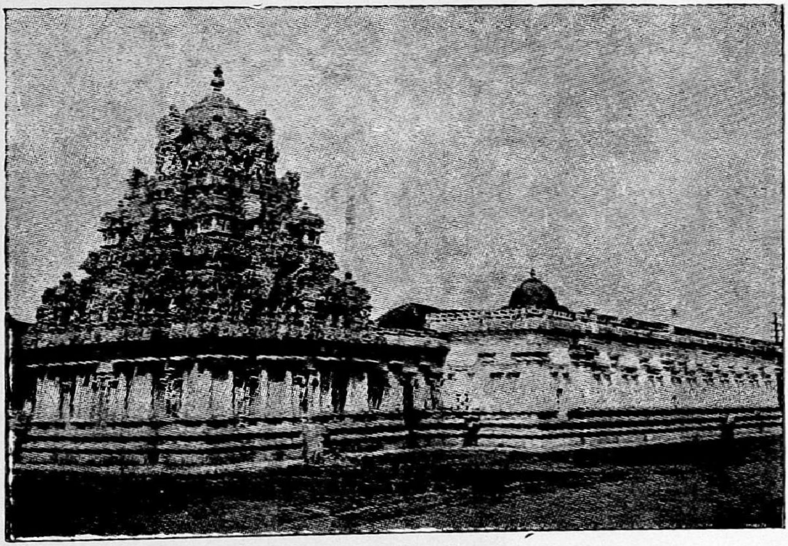


4. Vimāna of the Vanmīkanātha from south west.

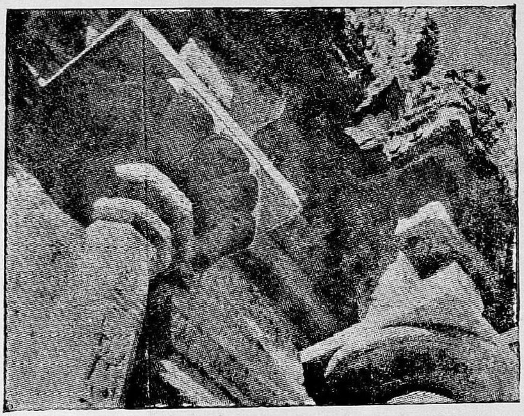
5. Pilaster and niche on the south wall of the Vanmīkanātha.



6. Acalēśvara shrine from west.

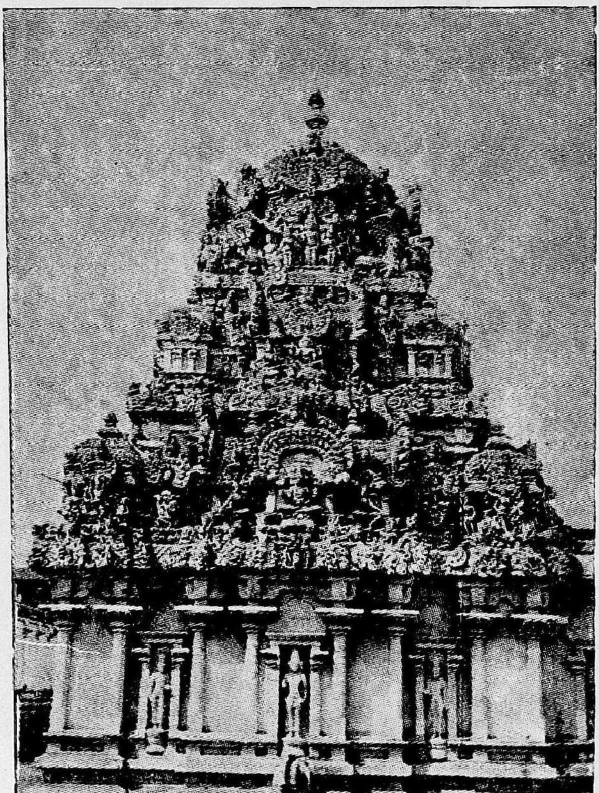


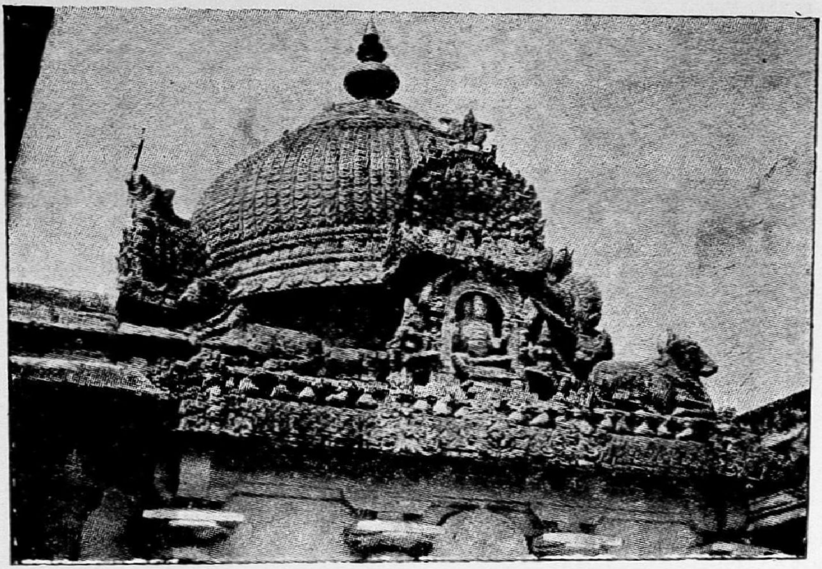
7. Acalēśvara shrine from north-east.



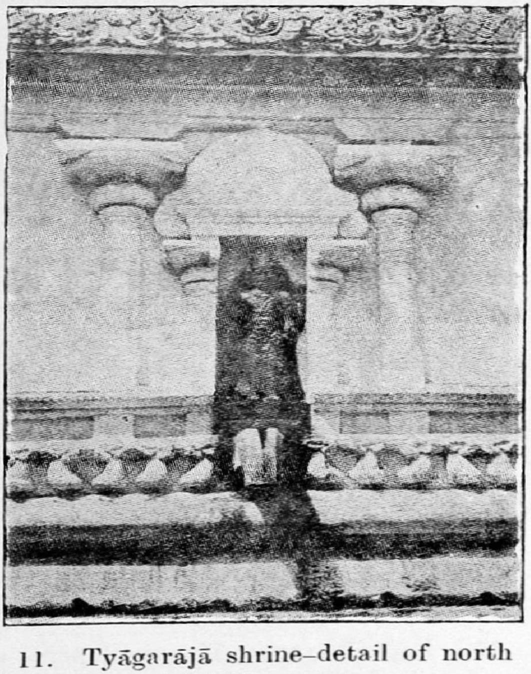
8. Acalēśvara shrine–detail of the pilasters.

9. Acalēśvara shrine-vimāna from north.

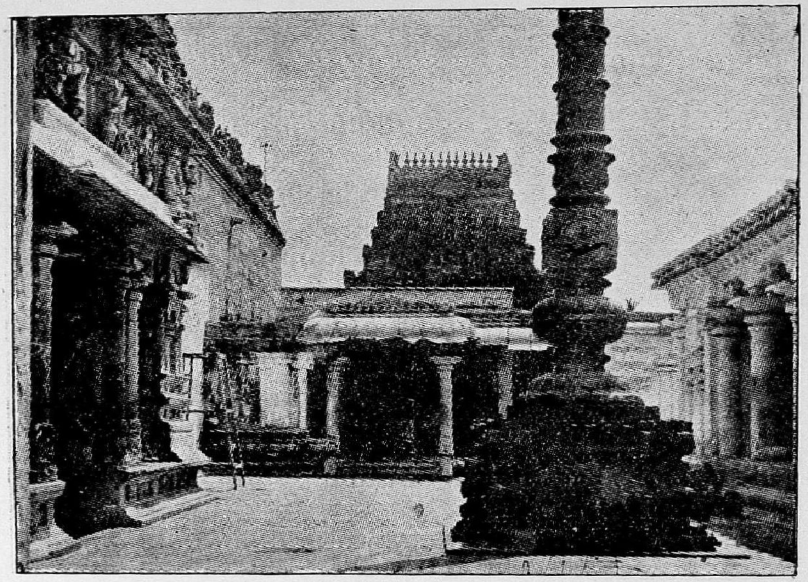




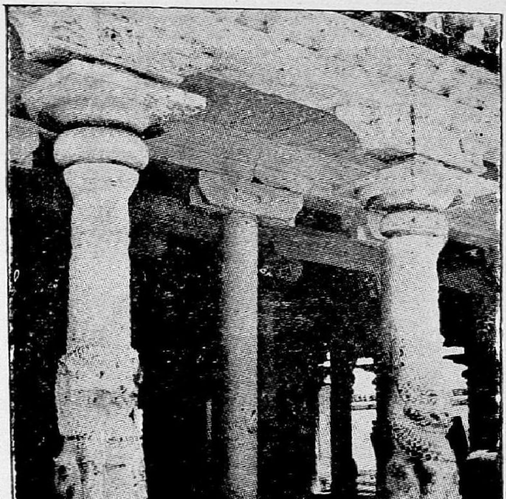
10. Vimāna of the Tyāgarāja shrine, from north.



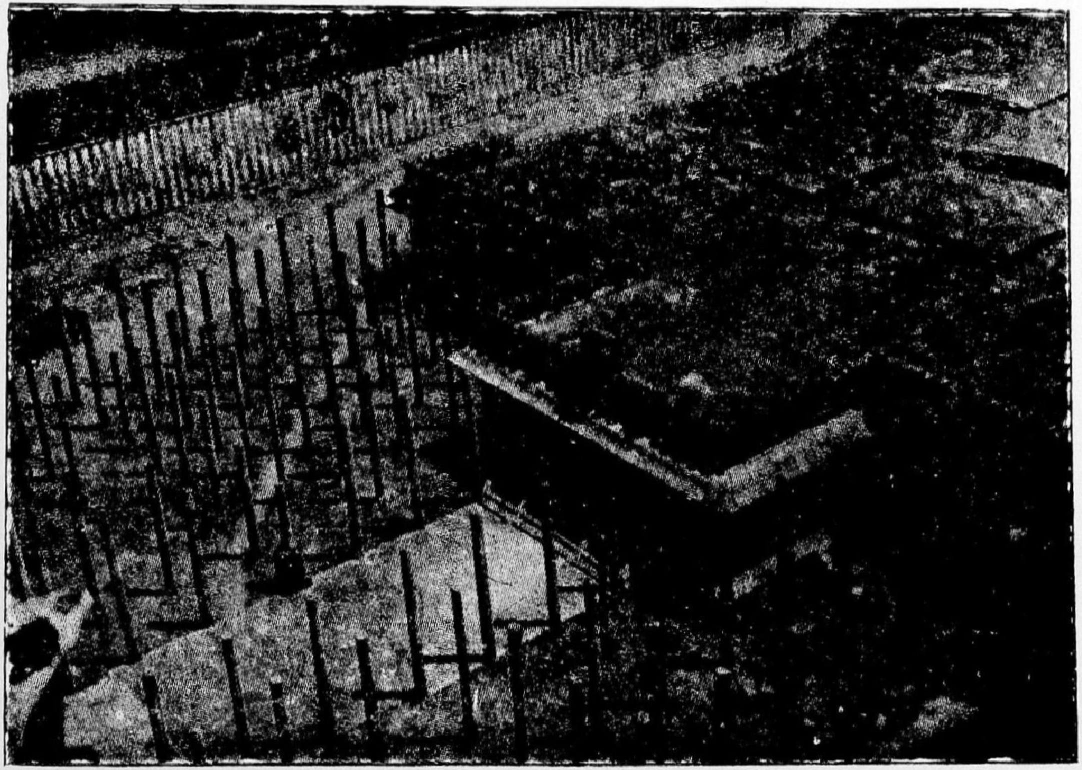
11. Tyāgarājā shrine–detail of north wall of the sanctum.



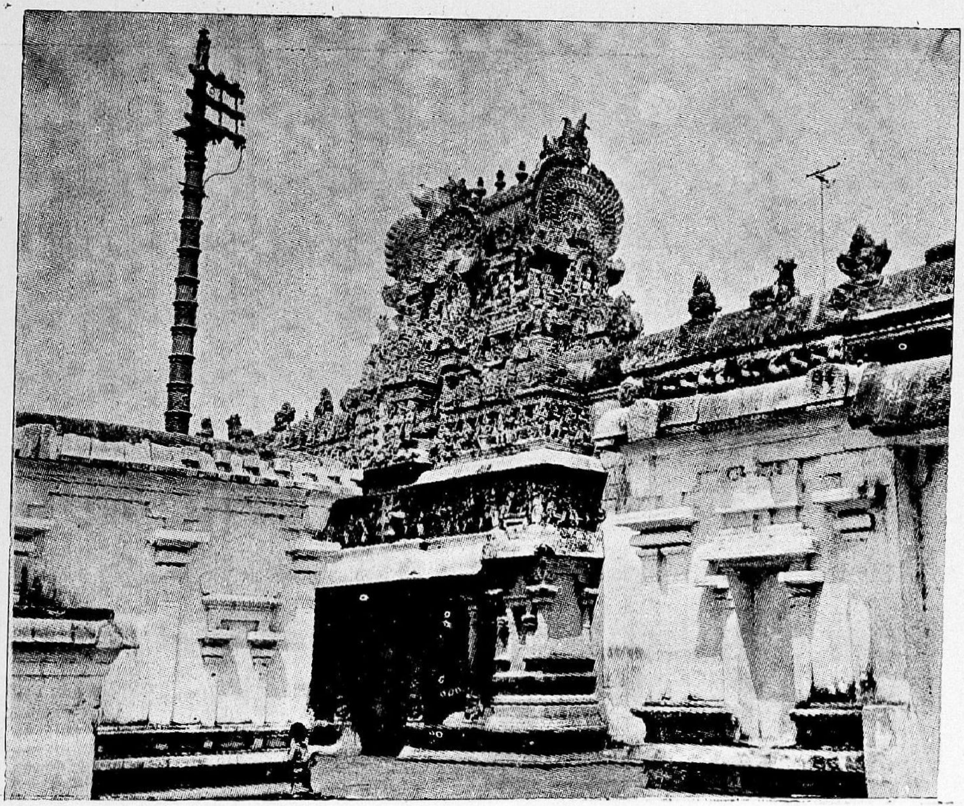
12. Nīlōtpalāmbāḷ shrine, with Rājanārāyaṇan Tirumaṇḍapam in the right foreground.



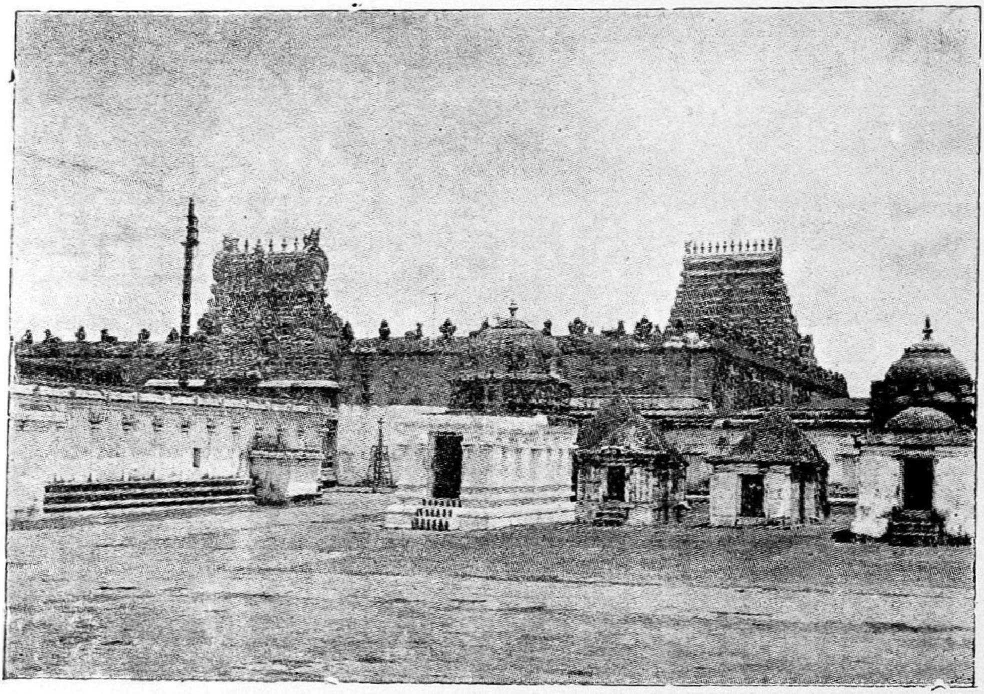
13. Rājanārāyaṇan Tirumaṇḍapam–detail of pillars on the west end.



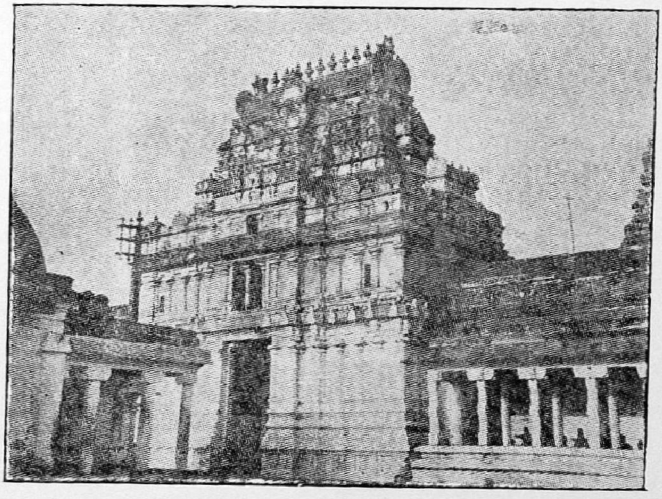
14. Free standing colonnade in third prākāra with Dēvāśryan Maṇḍapam on the right.



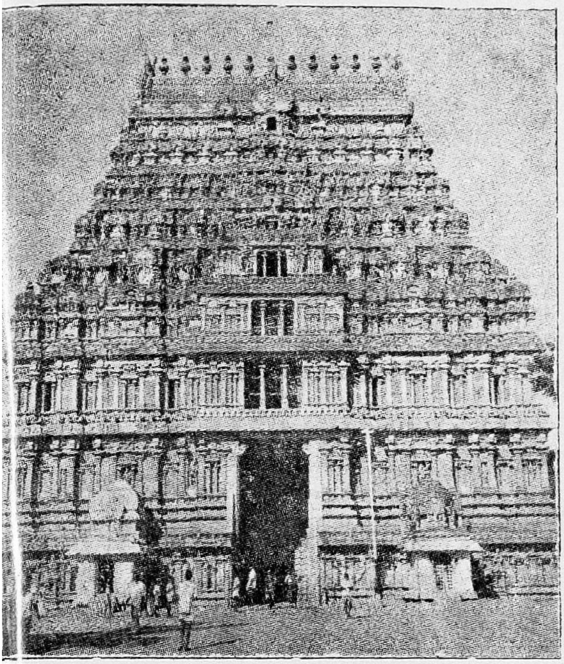
15. Gōpura of first prākāra from north east.



16. General view of second prākāra from north east with east gōpura of first prākāra in the foreground and west gōpura of third prākāra in the background

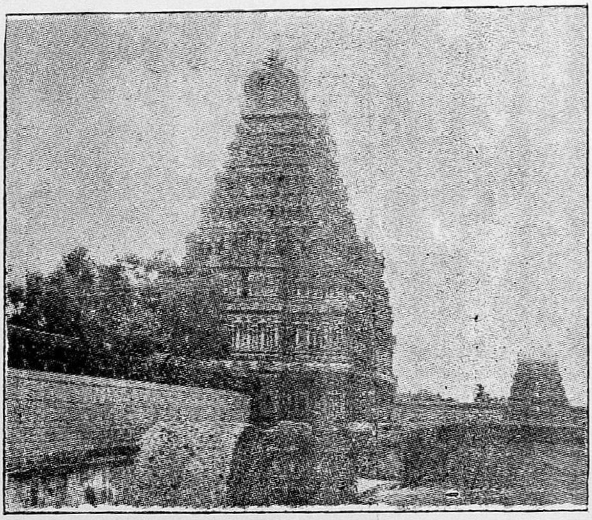


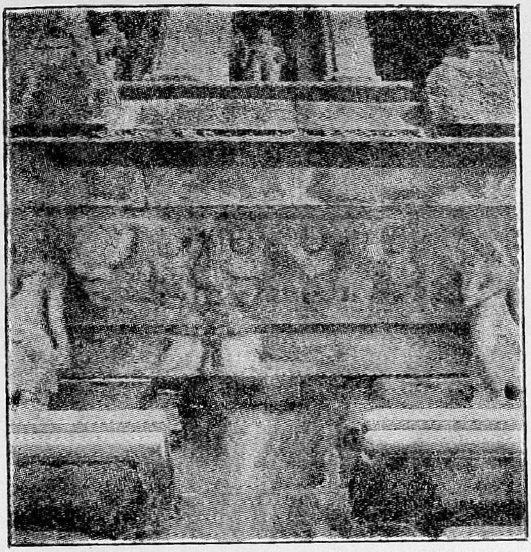
17. East gōpura of second prākāra from south west.



18. East gōpura of third prākāra from east.

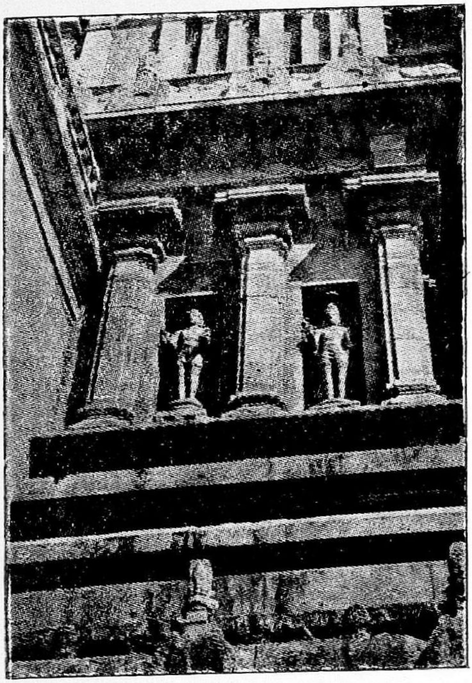
19. East gōpura from north-west.

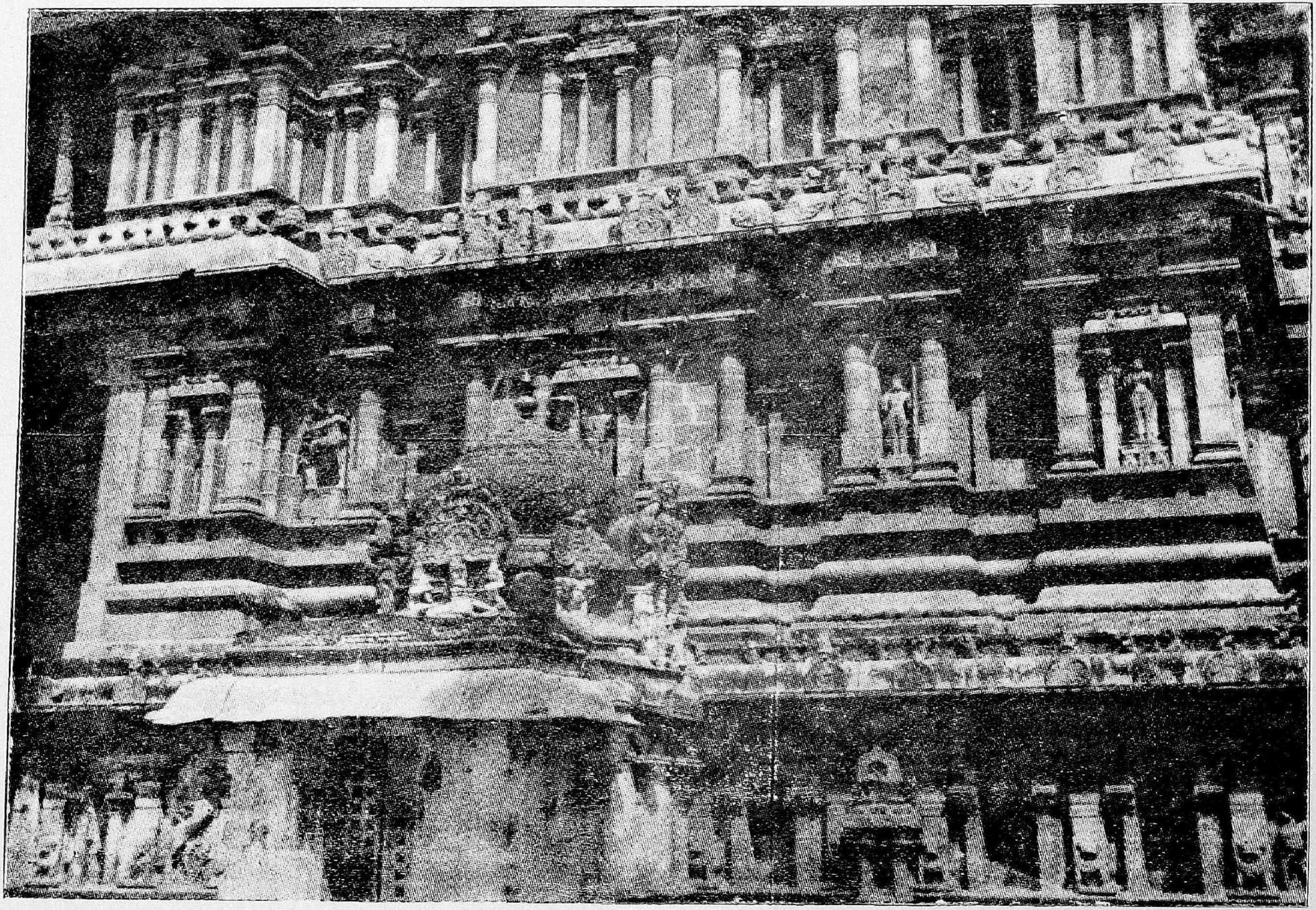




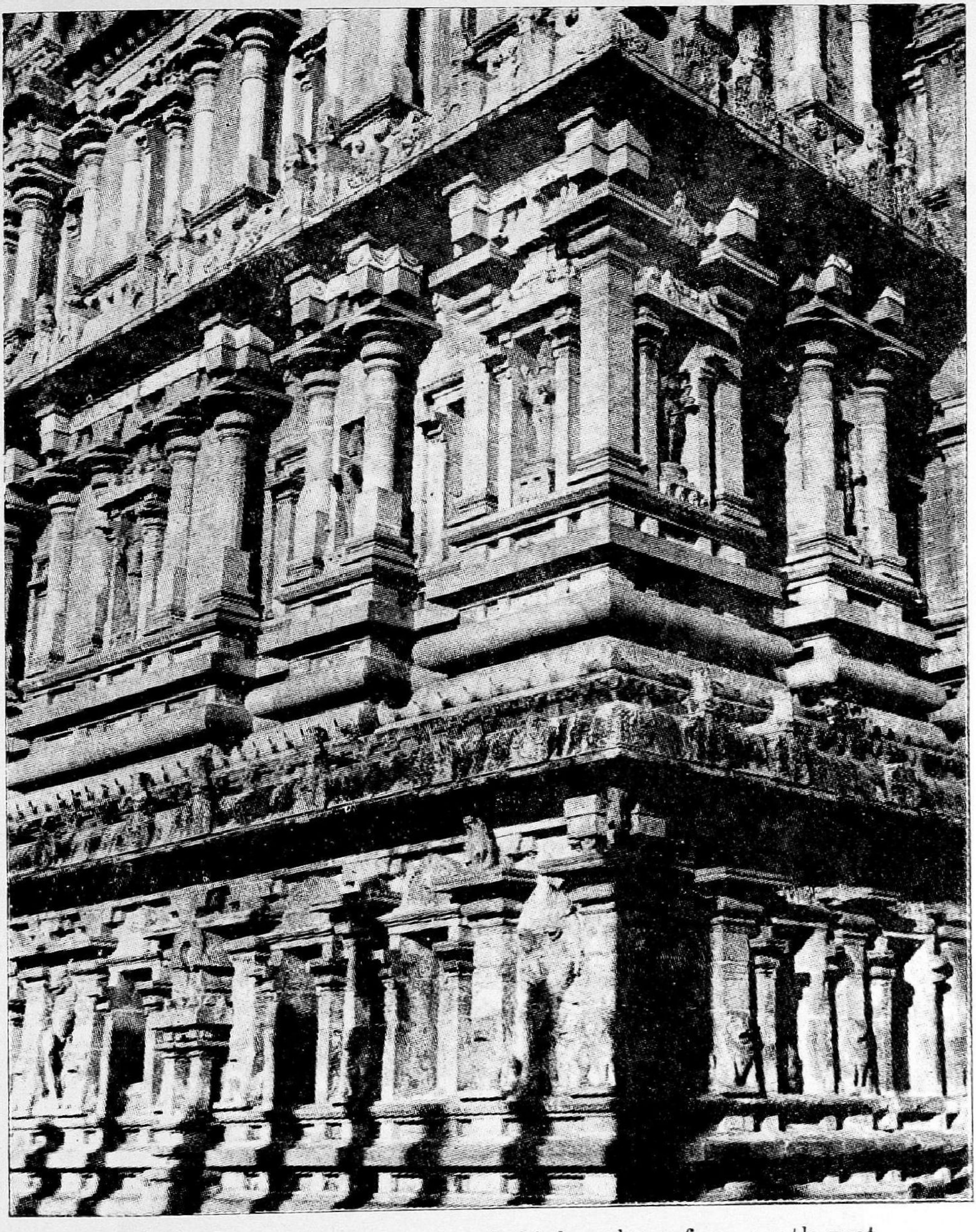
20. Basement of east gōpura-detail.

21. Basement of east gōpura-detail from north.

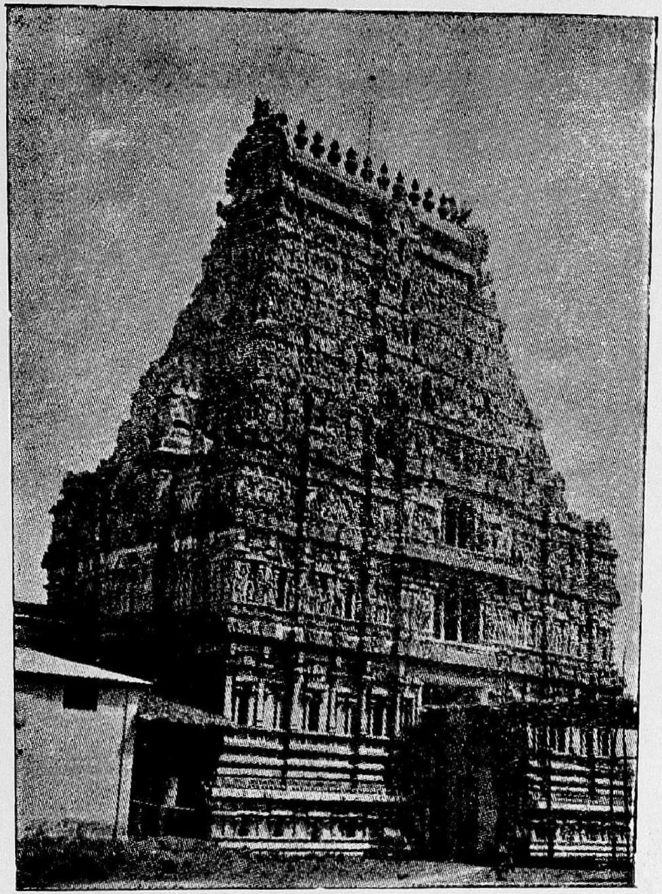




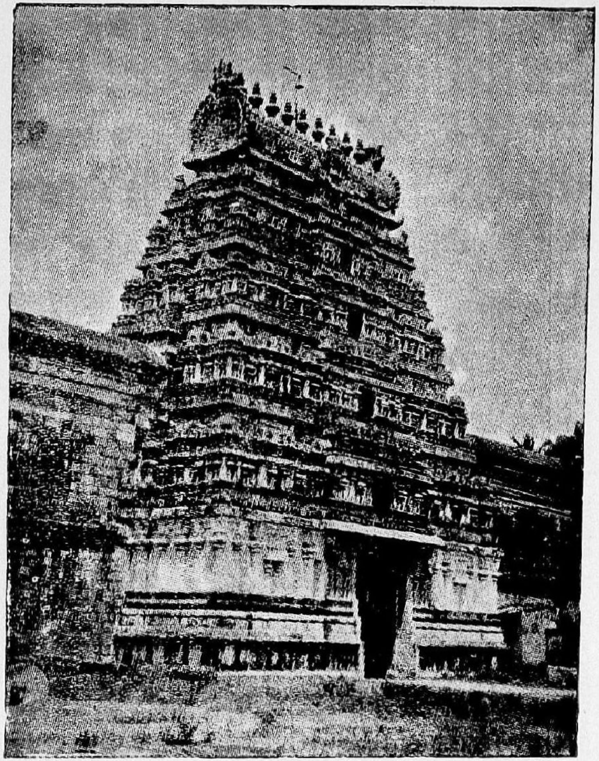
22. Basement of east gōpura of third prākāra from south-east.



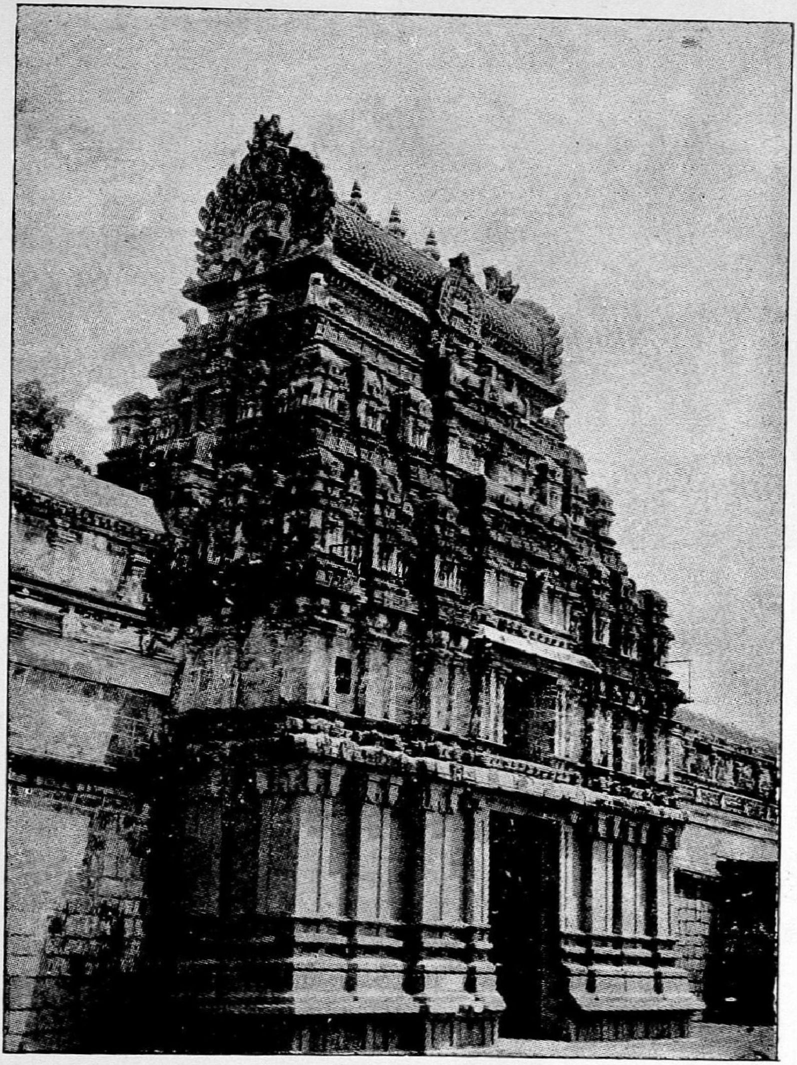
23. Basement of east gōpura of third prākāra from south-west.



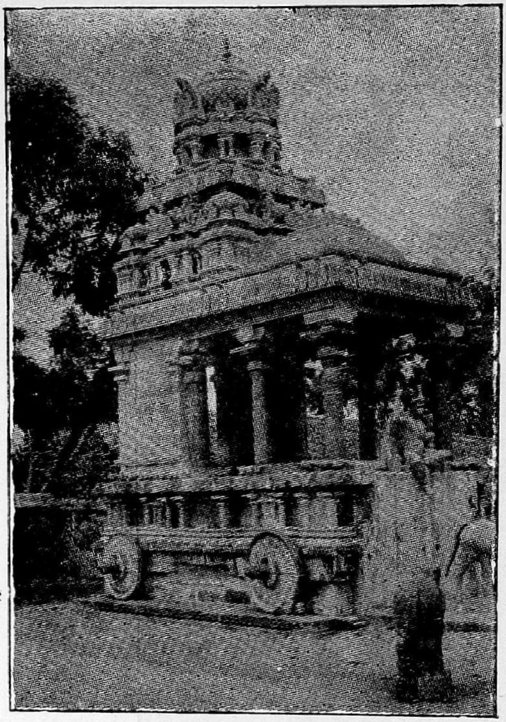
24. West gōpura of third prākāra from south east.



25. South gōpura of third prākāra from north-east.

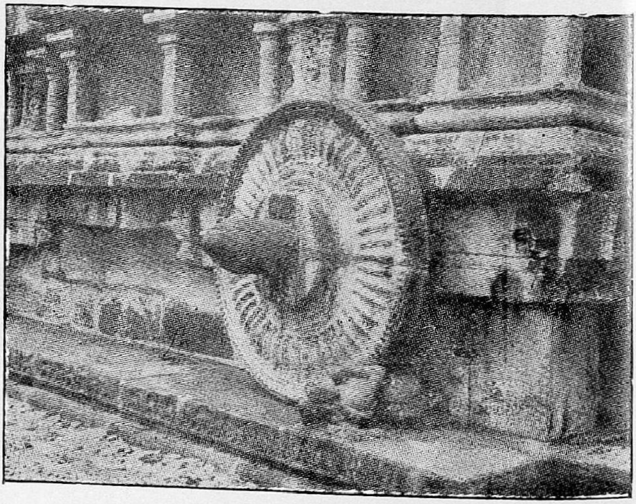


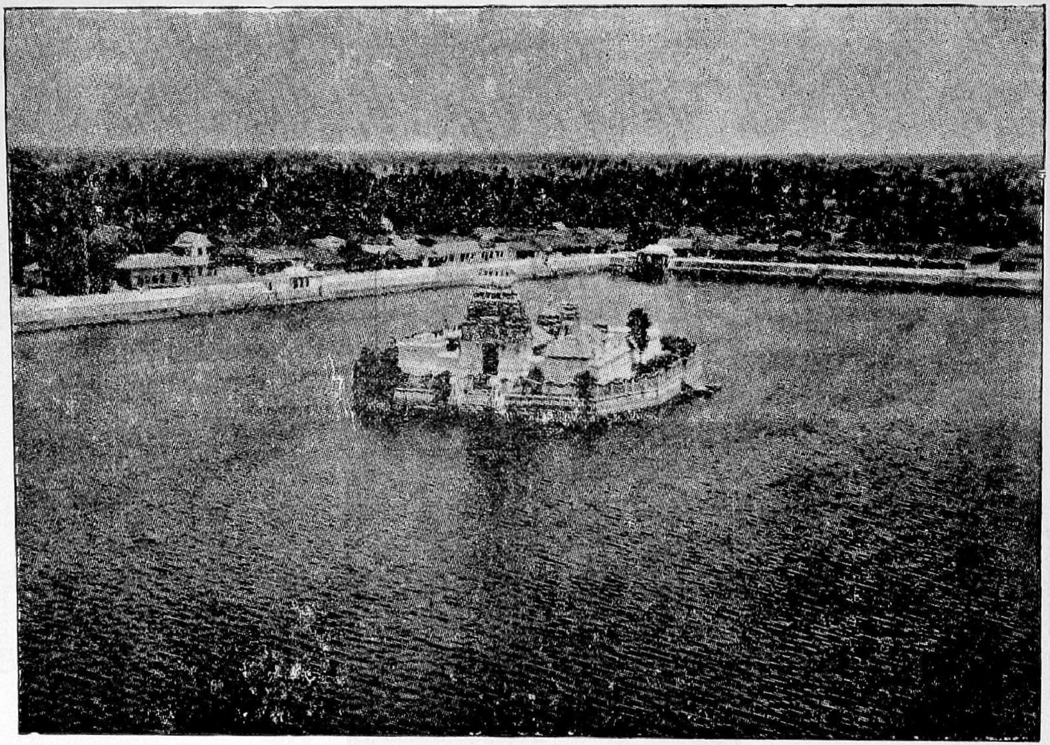
26. North gōpura of third prākāra from south-east.



27. Stone chariot north-east of the temple complex.

28. Stone chariot detail.



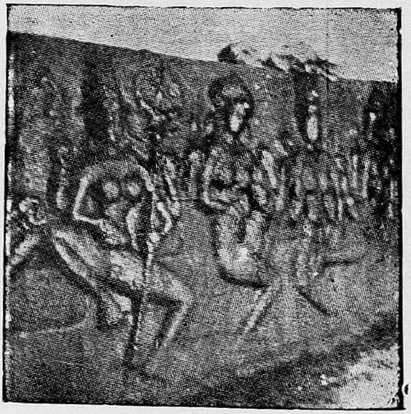


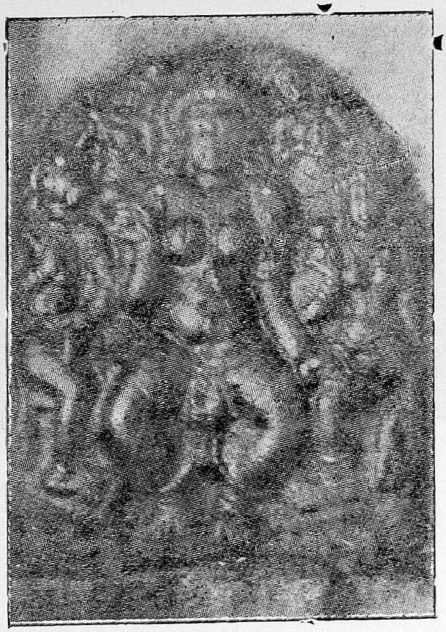
29. The Kamalālaya, with late island temple in the middle from east.

30. Saptamātrikas-Brahmāṇi, Māhēśvarī and Kaumāri.

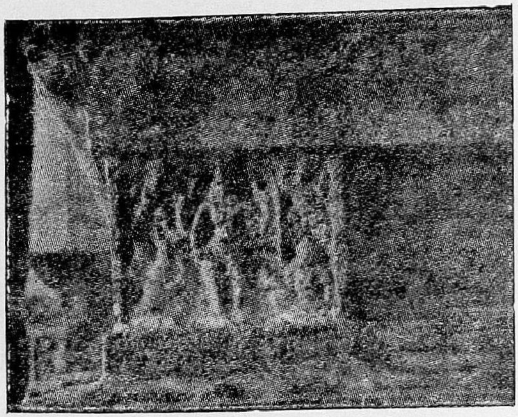
31. Saptamātrikas-Māhēśvari, Kaumāri, Vaishṇavī and Vārāhī

32. Saptamātrikas-Vārāhi, Indrāṇī and Cāmuṇḍā.

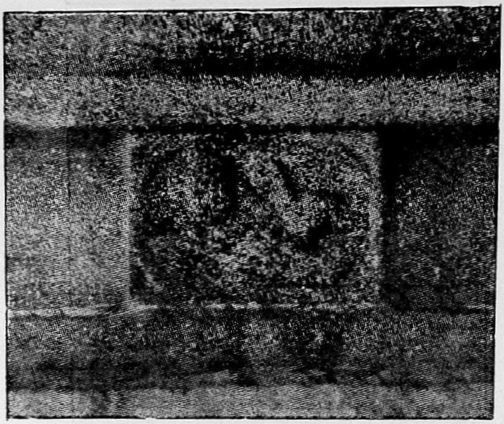




33. Jyēsṭhādēvī.

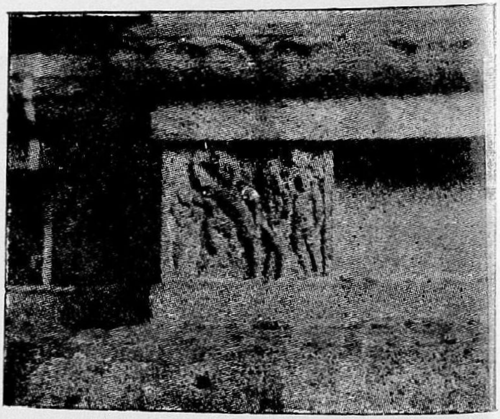


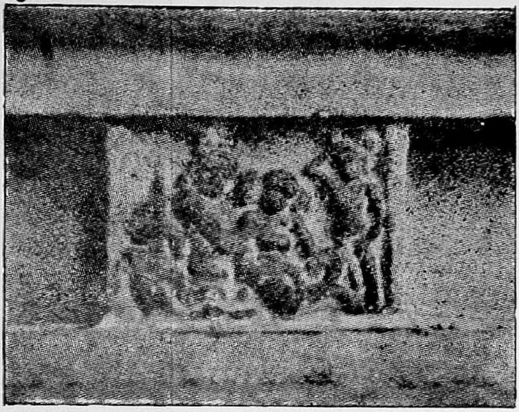
34. Basement of Vanmīkanātha shrine-panel depicting Durgā.



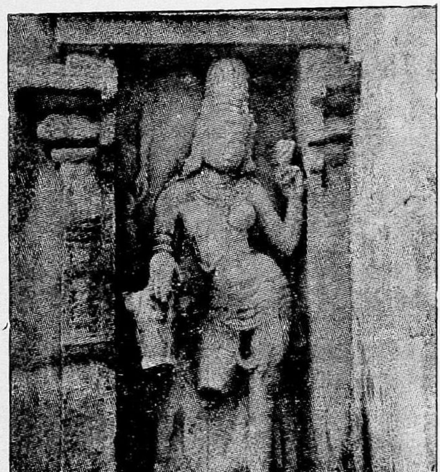
35. Basement of Vanmīkanātha shrine panel depicting Vaṭapatrasāyi.

36. Basement of Vanmīkanātha shrine Unidentified panel.



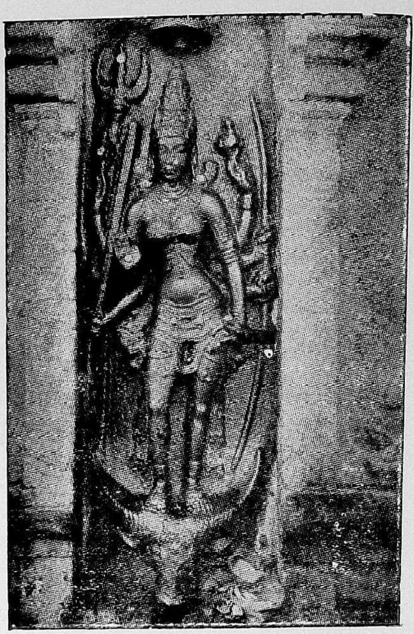


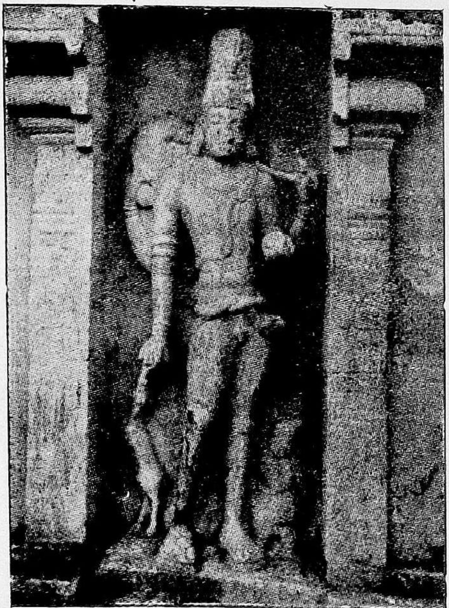
37. Basement of Vanmīkanātha shrine–unidentified panel.



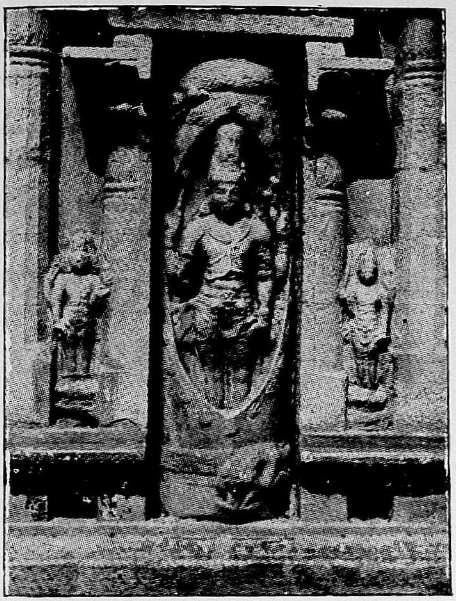
38. Ardhanārīśvara–north wall of Acalēśvara shrine.

39. Durgā-north wall of Acalēśvara shrine.





40. Kaṅkāḷamūrti-north wall of Acalēśvara shrine.

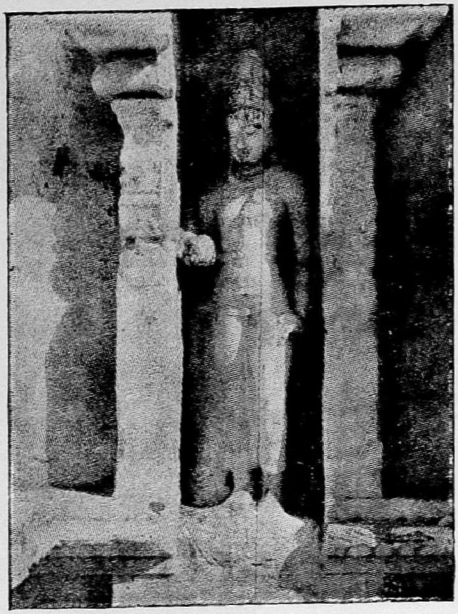


41. Liṅgōdbhava, east wall of Acaleśvara shrine.

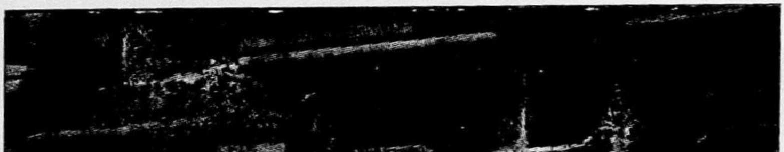
42. Portrait–north wall of Acalēśvara shrine.

43. Portrait–north wall of Acalēśvara shrine

44. Portrait–east wall of Acalēśvara shrine.



45. Portrait–east wall of Acalēśvara shrine.

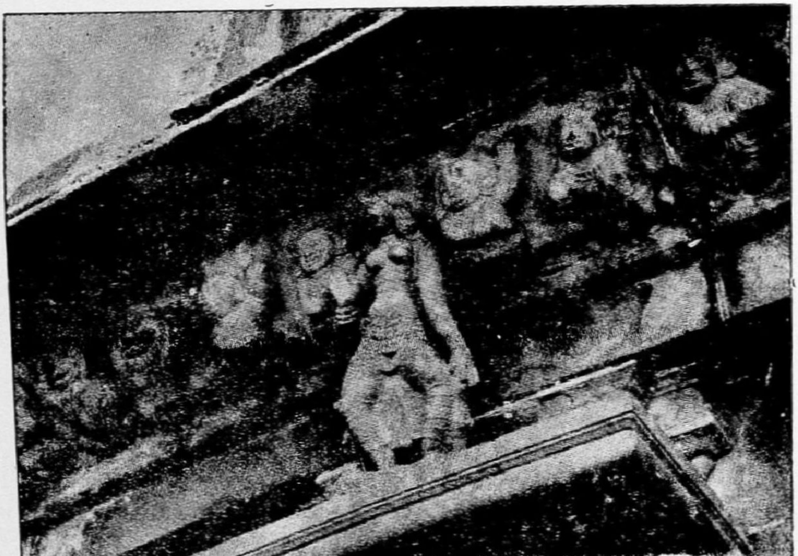


46. Basement of east gōpura of third prākāra detail.

47. Basement of east gōpura of third prākāra-detail

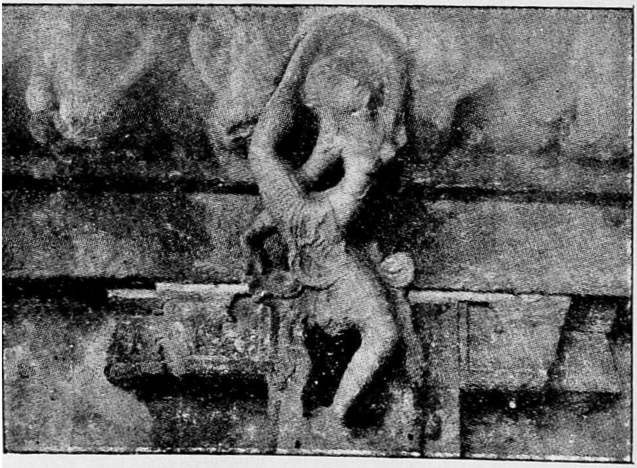
48. Basement of east gōpura of third prākāra-detail

49. Basement of east gōpura of third prākāra – detail.

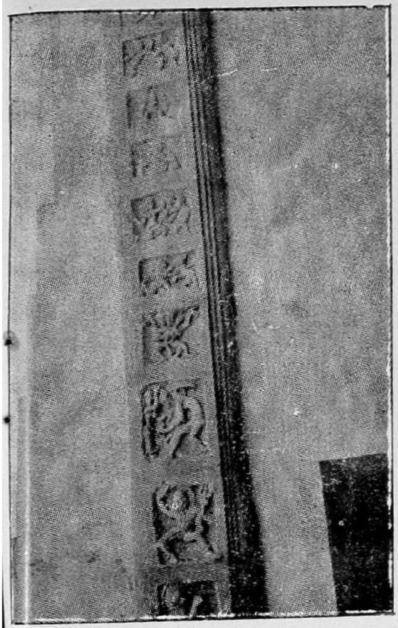


50. Basement of east gōpura, danseuse above pilaster.

51. Basement of gōpura of third prākāra danseuse above pilaster.

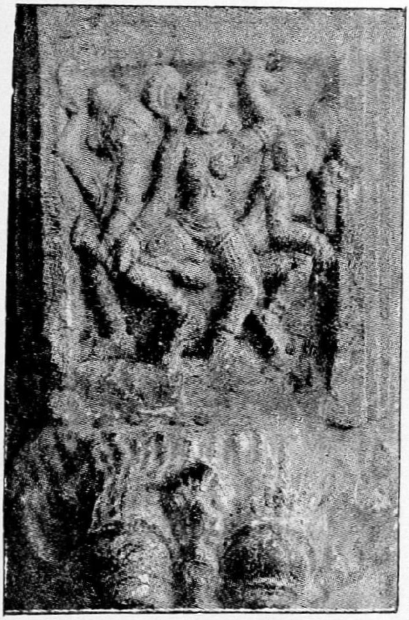


52. Basement of east gōpura of third prākāra danseuse above pilaster.



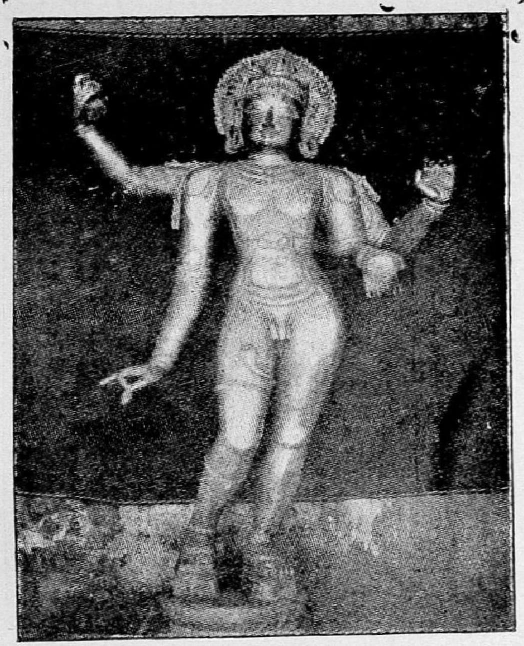
53. Entry way pilaster – north side – west gōpura of third prākāra.

54. Entry way pilaster – west gōpura of third prākāra – detail.



55. Entry way pilaster, west gōpura of third prākāra – detail.

56. Entry way pilaster, west gōpura of third prākāra – detail.



57. Bhiksāṭana, Bronze.

58. Mucukunda–Painting on the ceiling of Dēvāśryan Maṇḍapam.

ARCHITECTURE

A study of the architecture of the Tiruvārūr temple reveals a melodramatic tale of the growth from the early Cōḷa shrine to the composite pillar of the Nāyaks. Though the mammoth proportions of the whole temple-complex covering an area of about twenty acres were already effected by the middle of the fourteenth century, every shrine and *maṇḍapa* in the temple seems to have undergone renovation; and coating of stucco and white-wash was indiscriminately carried out and is continued still.

The centre of the temple-complex is the double-shrine of Vanmīranātha and Tyāgarāja, around which the other four important shrines, two Dēvi shrines, many *maṇḍapas* and numerous little shrines fan out along the centripetally expanding *prākāras*, which are three in number. The dominating eastern *gōpura* of the outermost *prākāra* forms the proud facade. As one steps out of the western gateway of the third *prākāra*, a surprising sheet of about twenty-five acres of water, the temple-tank called Kamalālayam, awaits to add further awe and admiration. The broad main road lying between the eastern bank of this tank and the western wall of the third *prākāra*, looks like a narrow passage way, considering the holy expanses on both its sides.

The seven *gōpuras*, four over the third *prākāra* wall, two and one adorning respectively the second and first enclosures, are visible from a considerably long distance, and the general appearance reminds the Cidambaram complex and is conspicuously different from those of Śrīrangam and Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. Even inside the temple, thanks to some amount of taste maintained by later renovators, the central shrines and the Acalēśvara and the *Rājanārāyaṇan maṇḍapam* in the second *prākāra* retain the flavour of ancientness which is singularly absent in some huge complexes like the Jambukēśvara at Thiruvānaikkāval and the Mayūrnātha at Māyūram.

Early writers on the architecture of the Tiruvārūr temple seem to have been consternated by the massiveness of the aggregation and consequently pronounced unjustified remarks. For instance Fergusson is most unsympathetic when he lashes out as follows: "As an artistic design, nothing

can be worse. Thr gateways, irregularly spaced in a great blank wall, lose half their dignity from their positions; and the bathos of their decreasing in size and elaboration, as they approach the sanctuary, is a mistake which nothing can redeem. We may admire beauty of detail, and be astonished at the elaboration and evidence of labour, if they are found in such a temple as this, but as an architectural design it is altogether detestable." [1] What motivated the hasty judgement of Furgusson is obviously his failure of the examination of individual shrines, as borne out by his remark that the two central shrines were dedicated to "Śiva and his consort". Considering the growth of the complex through a span of many centuries, the general lay-out does not seem to be severely out of balance. However, an early Indian writer on the subject valiantly defends the harmony of the temple as a complex against Fergusson's "strong but unhappy peroration," but commits the same mistake of designating the Tyāgarāja shrine as that of the Dēvi.[2] Percy Brown also perpetuates the same folly in his monumental work.[3] With the above exceptions, which are, by the way unfortunate generalisations based on imperfect understandings of the temple-complex, no systematic description of the architecture of the temple has so far been attempted.

For facilitating an orderly account the description and evaluation of the architecture of the temple, its components may be studied *seriatim* in the following groups: shrines, *maṇḍapas* and *gōpuras*, though the chronological order may be reversed in some instances.

Vanmikanatha Shrine:

The earliest structure within the temple seems to be the Vanmīkanātha shrine. In its original form it consists of a square cella preceded by an *antarāḷa* as in most of the early Cōḷa shrines. The *upapīṭham* is completely obscured by the raised flooring, and the *padma* moulding that is seen all around the sanctum, making the shrine a *padmakōśa*, is also partially affected by the flooring. The lotus-petal moulding does not seem

1. *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, vol. I, p. 368.
2. A. V. Thiagaraja Iyer, *Indian Architecture* (Joint Ed. : Alexander Rea), vol. II, p. 113.
3. *Indian Architecture*, vol. I, p. 100.

to be very pronounced. The next relief of the *adhiṣṭāna* is the ubiqutous *kumuda* dominating by its size the entire basement. The bold, round moulding offers a study in contrast, relieved between the flowing upward line of the *padma* and the stark, perpendicular chamfering of the *kaṇṭa.* The latter is relieved with small rectangular off-sets, and longer recesses, the former sculptured into small panels. Above this runs a heavy moulding rectangular in section, again emphasising, the mouldings of different kinds found below, which as they rise and run round one another, gradually reduce the measurements of the basement, by deep dents, as found in between the *padma* and *kumuda.* The *varimānam* above the rectangular moulding is also relieved with off-sets and recesses, with small sculpture-panels.

The whole basement is a remarkable study in simplicity, bringing out at a single stroke the importance of swaying lines of the lower mouldings which help reduce the measurement of the rising *adhiṣṭāna,* and that of the sharp, straight lines of the upper mouldings, which form a firm base, and a relieved outline of the *tala* which rises immediately above them.

Above the basement, the *tala* resembles in many respects the Koranganātha at Srīnivāsanallūr. The niches which project from the wall are such narrow recesses that the images of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Lingōdbhava and Brahmā seem to overflow the encasing pilasters of the niches. Unfortunately the icons are so much coated with a thick layer of stucco that they hardly indicate any ancient Chōḷa features. However deep under such coating the stone images are still preserved. The pilaster order is exactly that of Koranganātha. The off-set that marks the niche, as in the Koranganātha is distinguished from the wall by a double pilaster on either side of the bay. Thus the otherwise rectangular relief from the wall is camouflaged effectively (fig. 5). The *makaratōraṇa* seems to have been deeply relieved with floral decorations but now carries a modern design composed with stucco. However the original contours are visible and the descending ends which have a circular finish descend spread under thick *palagais* of the adjoining pilasters. Modern paintings adorn the walls of the shrine by the side of the niches. The *gaṇa* frieze that is found running above the *uttiram* and below the cornice is one of the original gems of early Cōḷa architecture. This string of figures provides a proper finish for the plain ending of the wall and the beginning of the ornamented *vimāna.* For the *gaṇas* who are shown upto their waist are something more than humorous

in their gestures and the faces startingly retain much more individuality than some of the portraits of a later period.

The original cornice is obscured by an open-pillared circumambulatory attached to and going around the main shrine, marked by a small podium in line with the *upapīṭha* at the bottom and a massive curved up cornice finishing the roof of this later addition. The *vimāna* is one storeyed and the original stone structure is now found with heavy stucco finish (fig. 4). The cardinal points are occupied by heavy squat *sālās*, whose own *śikharas* are adorned with large gable ends. The *kūḍus* are more pleasing with their curvilinear *śikharas*. The *grīva* rises somewhat disproportionately, and the *śikhara* which is square in section is ribbed all over. The *grīva* has projecting niches on all the four sides containing stucco images appropriate to the directions, and large *simhalalāṭas* project from the *śikhara* above to top the niches. A gold plated *kalaśa* forms the finial. The *vimāna* closely resembles those of the Tirukkaṭṭaḷai and Tiruccendurai temples.[4]

The vestibule has four massive pillars two in a row, each row aligned to the sides of the entrances to the *antarāḷa* and the sanctum proper. The Pallava aroma persists in the pillar order which has a square base, octagonally chamfered shaft, pronounced *kalaśa* and massive *kumbha*. The *palagai* is very thick above while the bracket has bevelled corbels with roll-mouldings, median bands binding them. Two *dvārapālakas*, typically early Chōḷa specimens, guard the entrance to the shrine. The pediment above the entrance is relieved with a scene depicting the marriage of Śiva with Pārvati, but the slab seems to be a later addition.

The 18′ square cella and that of the *antarāḷa* with a 16′ side is the original structure, to which two *maṇḍapas* seem to have been added at a much later date. Considering the ancient features of the shrine, it can be assigned to the ninth century. The *maṇḍapa* immediately preceding the main shrine is divided into two by a later screen, near the small passage way, which connects this shrine with that of Tyāgarāja. (Plan. II) While the pillars found in the inner portion have smooth round shafts, with

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4. S. R. Balasubrahmanyam, *Early Chola Art*, Part I, pp. 90 & 94.

brackets bearing tenonlike projections, the *mukhamaṇḍapa*, which is a common one shared by the adjoining Tyāgarāja shrine offers a bewildering variety of pillars with round shafts and bevelled brackets, and square shafts with attached pilasters, the capitals of which bear seated lions above. The confusion in the *mukhamaṇḍapa* is the result of the raising of the ceiling, effected by the taller double columns bearing lions over the capitals, carried out presumably during the thirteenth century. The total length of 60′ of the *maṇḍapas* is terminated barely six feet short of the entry way of the *gōpura* of the first *prākāra*. The *mukhamaṇḍapa* is situated on a plinth of about four feet high, to keep in level with the entrance of the shrine proper. The *gōpura* of the first *prākāra* is in alignment with the Vanmīkanātha shrine, and thus differs from the Cidambaram complex, wherein the *gōpura* is not found to be oriented before the *mūlasthāna*.

Acalesvara Shrine :

The next shrine to be built inside tho temple–complex is that of Acalēśvara, situated in the south-east corner of the second *prākāra* (fig-6). The shrine faces west and is one of the four important shrines (other than Tyāgarāja and Vanmīkanātha) dedicated to Śiva, the rest being Āṭakēśvara, Ānandēśvara and Siddhīśvara. One of the inscriptions found on the walls of the shrine clearly states that Sembian Mahādēvi converted the original brick structure of Acalēśvara into a stone shrine.[5]

The most ancient part of this shrine, which was built in the third quarter of the tenth century is a squre sanctum preceded by an *antarāḷa*. The *mukhamaṇḍapa* seems to have been added during the twelfth century, as two earlier records are found engraved on its walls, in the script assignable to twelfth century, copies of earlier ones.[6] The base consists of an *upapīṭha* and *adhiṣṭāna*. Over it raises the bhitti (wall) carrying niches and pilasters.

The *makaratōraṇa* does not extend down on the sides of the niches and thus stands in clear contrast to its counterpart in the Vanmīkanātha shrine. The swaying outer line of the *tōraṇa* is marked with a beautiful floral border, culminating in the apex a *simhamukha*. In the middle of this

5. 571 of 1904; *S.I.I.*, Vol. XVII, No. 617.
6. *Supra*, p. 45

beautiful, elliptical motif sculptures depicting deities, holy personages and animals, (described in detail in the section on sculpture,) are found relieved through slight incision. The pilasters also have floral decorations and small panels of sculptures on the *kalaśa* and shafts.

A beautiful *gaṇa* frieze runs round the sanctum and extends over the entrance of the vestibule also. Some of the dwarfish figures are found playing musical instruments like flute and drum, while the rest support the *uttiram* with upraised arms.

The *vimāna* is of the *dvitalaprāsāda* variety rising in two diminishing storeys, surmounted by a globular *śikhara*. The superstructure is also of stone but application of stucco completely obscures the original appearance. Each storey has four *śālās* and equal number of *kūḍus*, the former having large gable ends at the sides and niches in the middle surmounted by *simhalalāṭas*. In the first tier two large caitya windows are placed one on each side of every *śāla*. The corresponding portions in the second storey are filled with shallow, empty niches (fig. 9). The *grīva* is completely obscured by a congregation of stucco figures which are apparently late. The globular *śikhara* has large *simhalalāṭas* which cap the niches found on the *grīva*.

The *vimāna* during this phase seems to have assumed an elegance and a soaring character. A middle course of poised, diminishing gradation is evolved, in contrast to the steep soaring effected by the taller pavilions perched on the later pallava *vimānas*, and the plump, vital appearance of those of the earliest Chōḷa specimens. In both disposition and elegance the *vimānas* of the temples at Paḻaiyāṟai and Śembiyanmādēvi resemble that of the Acalēśvara.

The vestibule has four pillars which are very massive like all individual columns of the early Chōḷa period. They have bevelled corbels adorned with roll-moulding and *paṭṭa*, thick *palagais* and round *kumbhas*. The shafts are round and smooth, resting on flawlessly chamferred square bases.

The *mukhamaṇḍapa*, a twelfth century addition has pillars which have square shafts with octagonally chamferred middle. The capitals are of simple motifs with bevelled corbels, releasing tenon-like projections. The basement of the *maṇḍapa* has been tastefully made to resemble that

of the shrine proper, with *padma* moulding running round, surmounted by a *kumuda* and two bands, rectangular in section and interspersed with off-sets and recesses.

Tyagaraja Shrine :

Chronologically the shrine of Tyāgarāja represents the next phase in the architecture of the temple-complex. It is situated on the southern side of the Vanmīkanātha shrine and shares a common *mukhamaṇḍapa* to form a double-shrine. The east facing shrine was built in stone during the reign of Rājēndra I, as evidenced by an inscription found on the shrine wall. 7

The basement of the shrine assumes a massive appearance, as mouldings relieved on it are few in number, and when compared with those of Vanmīkanātha, Acalēśvara, are of larger proportions (Fig. 11). The basement below the *padma*, as in the case of the Vanmīkanātha, is buried under the raised flooring. The *padma* moulding is very large and the petals have sharp edges; the up-curving line of the moulding is gracefully connected under the *kumuda*. The latter is smooth and round, and have at the corners sharp lines marking the turning, unlike its counter part in the Vanmīkanātha, where the point is rounded out. A large *yāḷi* frieze is placed above the *kumuda*, which ends in *makara* heads, the latter featuring warriors inside their wide-open mouths, at the corners. The pronounced *varimānam* surmounting the frieze lets down the bases of the pilasters to produce rectangular recesses around the sanctum. The pilasters have brackets, thinner than those of the earliest shrines, and have roll-mouldings under their bevelled faces. The *palagai*, though large, is also thin. A deep octagon is relieved under the *palagai*, and the lotus is conspicuous by its absence. Even lines of incision denoting the petals, as depicted in the second order of pilasters in the Acalēśvara shrine, are not seen here. Instead, the lower portion of the abacus descends in a gracefully flowing line. The cushion is an octagon with the vertical delineation being rounded out. The *kalaśa* is elongated and its outlines are rigorously pressed inwards resulting in an disproportionate *taḍi* under the large capital. The whole pilaster is devoid of ornamentation but for shallow flutings to mark

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7. 680 of 1919.

off the *padmabanda.* The shaft is chamferred to produce on octagon in section. Here is the precursor of the later pilasters which develop featureless abacus, squat rectangular *kalaśa* and plain shafts. It became a handy motif to adorn the basement of the *gōpuras*, broadened still more to suit the structures which had a rectangular plan.

The wall surfaces are severely plain and the three niches, containing the images of Dakṣiṇāmūrti on the south, Viṣṇu on the west and Brahmā on the north walls of the shrine, are deep in the walls and do not project, as found in the shrines of Vanmīkanātha and Acalēśvara. The almost circular *makaratōraṇas*, hang their circular ends, which are not properly finished, above the *palagais* of the pilasters of the niches. With enormous space left blank on both their sides, the closely executed pilasters and niche without off-set present an unduly crowded appearance, above the clearly delineated, massive and balanced mouldings found on the basement. The *gaṇa* frieze under the heavy cornice which lacks sweeping curve, is schematic in its composition.

The globular *śikhara* rests right over the sanctum (Fig. 10). Here also the superstructure is found coated with a thick layer of stucco. The smooth, round *grīva*, provides a deep relief for the massive globe and present protruding niches, which are bordered below by the *yāḷi* frieze. Large *simhalalāṭas* surmount the niches and their ornamentation is obviously by the application of stucco. Circular decorations over the shade projecting around the *grīva*, floral band around the *śikhara*, and beaded and leaf-like reliefs over the globe are also executed in stucco. Four *nandis*, one in each corner, are placed on the roof of the sanctum

The roof of the *antarāḷa* rests on six pillars. Here the definite change in the pillar order is clearly visible. The pillar has a square base, octagonally chamfered middle and a squat *kumbha*. The heavy rectangular brackets are bevelled, but tenon-like projections are also found.

The plan of the shrine reveals an *antarāḷa* larger than the sanctum proper. The sanctum is a square with a side 18 feet long and the vestibule, which is almost a square measures 20 feet along the side.

The *mahāmaṇḍapa* has a southern entrance led by a flight of steps, due to the higher level maintained by this *maṇḍapa* as well as the *mukhamaṇḍapa*, which presents on the east a common facade to the shrines of

Vanmīkanātha and Acalēśvara. The *maṇḍapa* complex apparently effected during the 12th century measures 64 feet to 60 feet and an opening on the southern wall of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* of the Vanmīkanātha shrine connects it with that of Tyāgarāja. The confused order of pillars in the first two rows of the *mukhamaṇḍapa* before each shrine is the result of the raising of the ceiling of the *maṇḍapa* during a still later period.

A two-storeyed, pillared-*verandah* abuts the first *prākāra* wall all round, inside the enclosure, and on the southern side the stone and metal images of the sixty-three *nāyanārs* are preserved. The western verandah houses some bronzes, and improvised shrines for Gaṇapati and Subrahmaṇya, erected by screening the pillars at the corners, are found respectively on the south-west and north-west. The cloistered peristyle terminates on the north-west in a late *maṇḍapa*, which houses the bronzes of Naṭarāja and Chandraśēkhara.

The circumambulatory passage on the southern half of the enclosure is completely roofed with slabs laid between the *prākāra* wall and the *maṇḍapas* in front of the shrine. The roofing, leaving the *vimāna* of the Tyāgarāja shrine, continues along the western cloister and joins the roof of the *maṇḍapas* on the northern side, leaving again the superstructure of the Vanmīkanātha shrine. Thus enough light is left in through the open space behind the shrines. Had the enclosure been completely roofed, as found in temples like the Mayūranātha at Māyūram appreciation of the walls and *vimānas* of the shrines would have been rendered difficult, if not impossible.

Other Shrines :

Excepting the shrines of Vanmīkanātha, Acalēśvara and Tyāgarāja, the other shrines in the temple, seem to have been completely rebuilt, in some instances as late as the seventeenth century. Of the two Dēvi shrines that of Nīlōtpalāmbāḷ situated in the second *prākāra* seems to be earlier. (Fig. 12) It consists of a rectangular sanctum preceded by a similar *maṇḍapa*, and a spacious *mukhamaṇḍapa*. The basement of the shrine seems to be irregularly executed, with a large rectangular moulding, above the *padma*, whose delineation in the petals is insipient. The octagonal moulding varies in size on the eastern side of the south facing shrine. The pillars of the *maṇḍapas* are uniform

with slender, square shafts, surmounted by capitals with inverted buds under the corbels. The *mukhamaṇḍapa* has a small porch, borne on four pillars, which offer a pleasing break with round shafts resting on lion base and squat *kumbhas*. However the *maṇḍapas* including the porch are assignable to 15th–16th centuries.

The Kamalāmbāḷ shrine which is situated in the north-west corner of the third *prākāra* is a temple in itself having its own *gōpura* and *dvajasthambha*. But the whole complex seems to be very late, assignable only to the 16th century. But the plan of the shrine has many novel features. The whole structure, including a late pillared pavilion and an open pillared *maṇḍapa* in front of the *gōpura*, faces north-east. The sanctum is a long rectangular structure, the length oriented north-east to south-west. An almost-square *maṇḍapa* immediately precedes the sanctum. The circumambulatory is covered by a vaulted roof; and access to it is gained only from the *mukhamaṇḍapa*. A cloistered *verandah* with a high basement runs around the shrine along the enclosure wall which separates the shrine and the *mukhamaṇḍapa* from the open-pillared *maṇḍapa*, from which the shrine is entered through a *gōpura*.

The shrine walls as would be evident from the plan have deep vertical recesses and off-sets, minimising the effect of the already insignificant mouldings of the basement. In the pillars not even a single ancient feature is identifiable. The *gōpura* and *vimāna* are again featureless, having been renovated very recently.

The three shrines of Āṭakēśvara, Ānandēśvara and Siddhīśvara, dedicated to Śiva and situated respectively in the south-west, north-west and north-east corners of the second *prākāra* are very small structures constructed during later periods. The Ānandēśvara is constructed entirely of bricks, covered with cement coating. Somehow only the Acalēśvara which is situated in the south-east corner of the same *prākāra*, along which the above three shrines should have been in existence from very early times, seems to have been held in importance during the tenth century to deserve a considerably large stone structure. Perhaps it was deemed holier than the rest as it was hymned by Appar.

Stone chariot :

The stone chariot depicting the legend relating to Manunīti Chōḷa, is outside the temple, near the third *prākāra* wall. (Fig. 27) Only the basement and some of the pillars of the structure are original, and the *vimāna* and the vaulted roof of the porch have been rebuilt only five years ago. The chariot has four wheels, spokes of which are graphically relieved. Under one of the wheels the son of Manu is found being crushed (Fig. 28). A moulding in the basement, connecting the wheels simulates the flexible jerk arrester and above are found short pilasters. The pillars, with modern brackets, retain the more ancient thin *palagais*, pronounced *kumbham* and well-marked *padmabandham*. A modern piece of sculpture apparently that of Manu Chōḷa sits at the plinth of the *maṇḍapa* and drives the horses (made of concrete mixture), perched in front of the structure.

A small shrine situated in the second *prākāra* called *Viśvakarmēśvaram*, is a typical specimen of the late Vijayanagar period. With a square sanctum preceded by a similar vestibule and a considerably large *maṇḍapa*, the west facing shrine, exhibits all the floral features, the architectural members of any structure could bear. The thin, multiple mouldings, of which the excessively ribbed *kumuda* and an octagonally chamfered one are prominent, lack *chiaroscuro*, due to lack of depth and the wall surfaces are filled with shallow pilasters, with brackets bearing well-developed *pūmunais*, which hang down to the level of the *kamalam* below the receding abacus. The wall surfaces are not plain but are found meticulously relieved with *kumbhapañjaras*, the flowing foliages of which droop on the *vari*. The *vimāna* above is single storeyed with a featureless *śikhara*; however, the superstructure seems to have been renovated recently. The whole shrine is a study in ginger-bread ware, lacking vitality which has been exchanged for excessive elegance.

Mandapas : Rajanarayanan Thirumandapam

Of the numerous *maṇḍapas* found inside the temple complex, the *Rājanārāyaṇan Thirumaṇḍapam* appears to be the most ancient. It is situated in the second *prākāra* in between the *gōpuras* of the first *prākāra* and the second *prākāra*, its centre point on the western side aligned to the Vanmīkanātha shrine through the *dvajasthambha* (Fig. 12). The *maṇḍapa* stands on a low basement 3' high. The mouldings in the basement which

are worn out in many places attest to the early date of the construction : *padma* with large petals, smoothly rounded *kumuda*, a deep recess with interspersing rectangular projections and a featureless but well marked *kapota* above the recess, which borders the plinth all round. The rectangular *maṇḍapa* measures 155' to 57'. There are nine rows each consisting ten pillars, but in the fifth and sixth rows together lack thirty two pillars. For during a later period the central rows were removed and the ceiling in the middle of the roof was raised, as in the case of the *mukhamaṇḍapa*, in front of the shrines of Tyāgarāja and Vanmīkanātha.

Few pillars on the western and southern sides have lion bases, round shafts with ornamental decorations, pronounced *padmabandha*, beautiful *kalaśa* of flowing lines, round *kumbha* and thin *palagais*. The brackets have bevelled ends, and the roll moulding is bound by a broad but slightly incised *paṭṭa* ; dancing figures are found on the sides of the brackets (Fig. 13). The other pillars have even, round shafts surmounted by simple brackets with tenon–like projections. The massive beams with simple and deep lines relieved on their sides, add to the fresh and vital appearance of the pillars. Above the brackets of the pillars on the sides, the beam is relieved with rectangular projections simulating wooden rafters.

The central bay exhibits composite pillars with elaborately carved pilasters attached to them, surmounted by long rectangular brackets carrying *yāḷi* figures. The brackets let down well–developed *pūmunais* and apparently show that the raising of the ceiling was effected during the late Vijayanagar period.

Devasrayanmandapam

The thousand-pillared *maṇḍapa*, which is also called the Dēvaśrayan *maṇḍapam* is the largest *maṇḍapa*, inside the temple. It is situated in the third *prākāra*, covering an area of 210 feet by 140 feet. The basement is only 2 ½ feet higher than the ground level, relieved with a pronounced *padma* and a large *kumuda*. On the extreme northern side a sort of a raised pavilion is found inside the *maṇḍapa*. The pavilion is four feet higher than the floor-level of the *maṇḍapa*. The pillars found on this pavilion seem to be more ancient than the rest found in the *maṇḍapa*. They have ornamented brackets with undeveloped *pūmunais*. They are square in section and miniature shrines are relieved on their horizontally

divided sides. At the corners of each panel are placed roaring *yāḷis*. The deeply carved pillars resemble those found at the porch in the Airāvatēś-vara temple at Dārāsuram.

The rest of the pillars are very late with brackets releasing well-developed flower buds and ornamented medallions and dancing figures relieved on the sides of their square bases. In the middle rows of the pillars four square and an equal number of rectangular bays are formed by the absence of columns and their sides are marked by much ornamented composite pillars, attached with pilasters on three sides and having huge seated lions on their capitals, supporting the rafters on either side, which mark the raised ceiling above these bays.

Huge, octagonally chamfered free-standing columns are found before the *maṇḍapa*, which cover the entire length of the second *prākāra* wall, in the third enclosure (Fig. 14). Brown assigns them to the beginning of the 18th century and suggests that they had originally formed part of the plan of the thousand-pillared *maṇḍapa*, which was not completed as originally planned.[8] But some of these columns bear the words *takkārk-kuttakkān*, in a script assignable to 12th–13th century. The rough, massive exterior of the pillars does not suggest that they were erected for a *maṇḍapa*. Perhaps they were used, as they are even today, to put up pandals during festivals. Similar free standing colonnade is found in the Cidambaram temple also, used for the same purpose.

Other mandapas

The *Sabhāpati Maṇḍapam* which is situated in the third *prākāra*, near the western *gōpura* has a massive basement which is six feet high above the ground level. The rectangular *maṇḍapa*, to which a portico has been added in recent times, measures 125 feet to 75 feet. The whole *maṇḍapa* is conceived as a *padmakōśa*. A large, compressed *kumuda*, and a *kapōta* relieved with *kūḍu* arches are found above the *padma*. The pillars inside are slender and tall, with square bases and octagonally executed sides. The capitals have undeveloped flower buds. Here again

8. *op. cit.*, p. 100.

the central portion of the roof is found raised over double pillars, mounted by rearing lions.

The other *maṇḍapas*, like the *Taṭṭuccurri Maṇḍapam* and the *Vasanta Maṇḍapam* in the second *prākāra*, and the *Ūñjal* and *Baktakāsi Maṇḍapams* in the third *prākāra*, are very late structures, without any architectural features deserving detailed study.

Gopuras

The *gōpuras* of the Tiruvārūr temple are distinct architectural entities, closely resembling those of the Cidambaram temple and marking a definite stage in the evolution of this pylon-like structure which has become a standard symbol of the culture of Tamil country, and has been taken as the state emblem.

Of the seven *gōpuras* adorning the enclosures of the temple, all excepting the southern *gōpura* in the third *prākāra*, which is a very recent structure, persent a somewhat stunted appearance. It has to be remembered that the imposing gate-ways of later periods with uniform attenuation as they soar up, have evolved from the early types, which are insignificant structures, compared to the *vimānas* over the sanctum. The two *gōpuras* of the Great Temple at Tañjāvūr, which are among the early Chōḷa specimens have squat appearance, due to the enormous wagon topped *śikhara* with huge gable ends, mounted on broad, short tiers consisting of broad, rather than tall members.

The earliest *gōpura* of the Tiruvārūr temple is the one found over the entrance to the first *prākāra* (Fig. 15). The basement is very much obscured by the raised level of the floor of the second enclosure. Again a porch which was added later with projecting walls on either side completely covers the original basement. The entry way has a single *dvāra*, the jambs, door step and the lintel of which are devoid of ornamentation. The vestibules on either side of the entry way are not found in level with the latter and are single-storeyed.

The superstructure has two storeys, with wagon-topped pavilions in the centre and at the ends the members are found with curvilinier *śikharas* which are square in section. The *śikhara* has large gable ends relieved

with huge *simhalalāṭas.* The superstructure is adorned with many stucco images depicting purāṇic scenes.

The eastern *gōpura* of the second *prākāra* is distinguished from the others by its enormous base and the abruptly receding lines of the second storey (Fig. 17). In the basement above the *padma* moulding, dancing figures are depicted encased in rectangular panels. The panels are worn out, rendering the figures featureless. Above them another *padma* moulding occurs, and a large *kumuda* and a *varimānam* relieved with rectangular recesses follow. The tall slender pilasters with thin abaci and squat cushions rise up to the whole height of the entry way. A slightly projecting cornice, relieved with featureless trefoil windows marks off the basement. The first storey is marked by a dominating *śālā* in the middle representing the bay that projects throughout, beginning from the basement. The pavilions on the sides are more marked by recesses in between than by their individual projections emphasising the heaviness of the basement, which is seen without break, up to the second storey. The *grīva* is not much pronounced and the gable-ends are also proportionately relieved in the wagon-topped *śikhara.*

The eastern *gōpura* of the third *prākāra* is the largest of the gateways here, with a base measuring 110 feet to 60 feet. The superstructure rises to a height of about 120 feet (Fig. 18). The entry way has two *dvāras,* each consisting of two huge monolithic jambs which are devoid of ornamentation but for a fluting on the outer edges. In between the *dvāras,* the floor level within the entry way is lower than that on either side. Three pilasters are found on each side of the *dvāra* with *yāḷi* bases. The pilasters carry huge brackets with plainly bevelled edges, supporting the massive lintels, which form the ceiling of the entry way. The vestibules are two storeyed, each storey supported by two massive square pillars; while those found in the upper storey have *yāḷi* bases, the lower one has pillars resting on square bases. A flight of steps is found in each vestibule leading to the upper storeys of the *gōpura.*

The heavy basement is divided by a massive cornice carrying *kūḍu* arches surmounted by *simhamukhas.* The sub-basement begins from below with proportionately large *padma* moulding, petals of which

are marked by sharp and sweeping lines. A large *kumuda* above the *padma* is surmounted by a plain and broad *varimānam*, relieved with deep rectangular recesses. Empty niches and broad pilasters are found above the mouldings (Fig. 22). The latter have lion bases, decorated *kalaśas* and squat *kumbhas* (Fig. 46). The enormously thick *palagais* are relieved with lines; and dancing figures in various postures are found perched on them (Figs. 50 – 52). The pilasters of the niches are ornamented with floral decorations on the shafts and the *kalaśas*, and the *makaratōraṇas* above the niches are deeply carved with vine like decorations, encircling human figures. Warriors mounted on roaring *yāḷis* are found placed in between the pilasters and the niches. The sub-base seems to be more ancient than the structure which is found above the subsidiary cornice (Fig. 22).

The mouldings above the cornice of the *upapīṭha* seem to have been executed later than those found below, as evidenced by their sharp, straight lines. The sweeping *padma* is surmounted by a smooth round *kumuda*, which turns into an octagonal moulding as it approaches the entry way. Above the fluted *vari*, pilasters rise up in various orders: square shafts, compressed *kumbhas* and thick *palagais*; round shafts, round *kumbhas*, thick *palagais* with circles relieved under them; and fluted shafts, ribbed *kumbhas* and thin *palagais* with octagons thereunder (Fig. 23).

Deep niches are found in between the pilasters and icons of Durgā, Sūrya and Nāgarāja are found placed in them. The reliefs found in the basement, both vertical and horizontal present a beautiful and pleasing interplay of light and shade (Figs. 22 & 23).

The superstructure rises in five storeys, abruptly diminishing from the second storey. *Yāḷi* friezes mark off the tiers and the cornices, which are relieved with *kūḍu* arches, have plain curvings over the entry way. The tiers consist of the *pañjaras* of different orders; having wagon-topped roofs, narrow niches topped by *simhalalāṭas* and curvilinear *śikharas*, square in section. The projecting entry way below is marked off along the storeys with a projecting bay, effected by the diminishing gradations of broad *śālās*. The rectangular, wagon-topped *śikhara* is pleasingly ribbed, and is surmounted by eleven *stupis*. The *gōpura* can be assigned to the latter half of the 13th century, and the

sub-base seems to be even earlier, as evidenced by the sculptures found in it. However Brown's date of the 18th century given to the *gōpura* is quite unjustifiable. 9

The western *gōpura* of the third *prākāra* seems to be later than its eastern counterpart, more embellished with stucco figures and assuming a studied gradation above the first storey (Fig. 24). The basement is a poor imitation of the imposing one of the eastern *gōpura*, and the entry way is also less magnificant, with shorter pilasters relieved with panels of sculptures. The structure can be assigned to 15th–16th centuries.

The northern *gōpura* of the third *prākāra* (Fig. 26) and the western *gōpura* of the second *prākāra* are very late constructions, assignable to the 17th–18th centuries. However, by retaining a squat appearance, they follow the norm of the eastern *gōpuras* of the third *prākāra*, and maintains harmony with their more imposing and ancient counterpart.

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9. *Ibid.*

SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

The scuptural wealth of the Tiruvārūr temple is not on a par with its architectural grandeur. While *maṇḍapas* and *gōpuras* of immense dimensions were added during later times, when the emphasis was shifted on to the horizontal additions, the early shrines, when converted into stone structures, seem to have been rebuilt following the original plans of the previously existing buildings. Sculptures are found in small numbers in those shrines with the exception of the Acalēśvara, which houses in its niches a good number of icons and portraits. Otherwise the sculptures are confined to loose slabs and images, and to those found on the basement and the panelled slabs of the pilasters of the eastern and western *gōpuras* of the third *prākāra*.

Pallava Scupltures :

The earliest phase of the sculpture of the Tiruvārūr temple is represented by a Saptamātrika panel, now preserved in a separate shrine, which is a recent structure, in the second *prākāra* on the south east (Figs. 30-32). The panel is very much worn out and is of more iconographic importance than of sculptural interest.

The figure of Brahmāṇi (Brāhmī) is endowed with four heads (of which the back one is not visible) and four hands, but the latter do not carry the attributes in the order prescribed by the *Suprabhedāgama.* [1] Māhēśvari, the next one, carries the *mṛga* (deer) in the upper right hand and the *śūla* in the lower left. This figure also does not correspond in all details to the textual descriptions of the goddess.[2] Similarly the figure of Kaumāri hardly tallies with any of the *āgamic* stipulations.

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1. T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. I, Pt. II, pp. 353-4.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 387.

The figure of Vaisṇavī holds the *śankha* and *cakra* in the upper left and right hands respectively, while the lower right is in *abhaya* and the left rests on the lap. She wears a high *kirīṭa makuṭa* and other ornaments usually found on Visṇu images. Vārāhī who has the face of a Varāha, also holds the *śankha* and *cakra* in her upper hands and in addition a bow (*śārṅga*) is seen in her lower left hand. Indrāṇī also has four arms, holding the *śakti* in her upper right. The object held in the upper left is indistinct. The figure of Cāmuṇḍā has four arms, the upper right holding the *kapāla*. She wears a *yajñōpavīta* of skulls. The hair sticks out like a large halo behind the head, a characteristic feature associated with Cāmuṇḍā.

Slabs carved with Saptamātrika figures are common all over the region and the early reliefs invariably depict them, as found here, as seated with one leg on the seat (*āsana*) and the other hanging down. The earliest known sculptures of the seven mothers in the Tamil country belong to the Pallava period and the present group on stylistic grounds may be assigned to the 8th century A.D., i.e. the Pallava phase of sculpture.

Another early piece of sculpture, is an image of Jyēsṭhā lēvi, which is carved in bold relief in a loose panel kept in the northern cloister of the first *prākāra*. (Fig. 33) It was perhaps enshrined in a separate shrine during early times, as one of the *parivāra dēvatas*, attendant on the main deity. The image of Jyēsṭhā is represented with a flabby belly, thick thighs and raised nose. Her legs are hanging down in front of the *Bhadrāsana* on which she is seated. Her hair is done up in a knot. In her right hand she holds a *nīlōtpala* flower and her left hand rests on the lap of the female figure seated on her left. On the right of the Dēvi, there is an image of a bull-faced human being with two arms. In the right hand of this image a *daṇḍa* is held, which rests on its right shoulder; the left hand rests on the lap. In the *Pūrvakaranāgama* this being is declared to be the half-bovine son of the Dēvi. 3 The right leg of this figure is hanging down, while the left one is made to rest upon the seat. The image is decked with ornaments and a *kirīṭa* adorns its head.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 394.

To the left of the Dēvi is a female figure, whom the *Āmśumadbhēdāgama* calls Agnimātā. 4 She is seated with her left leg hanging down and the left hand of the Dēvi rests on her lap. In her right hand she holds a *nīlōtpala* flower and the left hand is made to rest on the seat. She is adorned with ornaments and wears a *karaṇḍa makuṭa* on her head. Two female attendants are also found in the background, one on each side of the Dēvi.

The image seems to belong to an earlier period, i.e. 8th century A.D. The early date is suggested by the style of carving, the treatment of Jyēshṭhā's lower garments with thick edges and also the head ornament with a thick lower edge resembling the head dress of the seated Gajalakshmi figure in the sculptured panel of the Ādivarāha cave at Māmallapuram.

Chola Sculptures :

The sculptures of the Vanmīkanātha shrine constitute the next phase. Unfortunately the images of Daksiṇāmūrti, Liṅgōdbhava and Brahmā, housed in the niches of its walls, are thickly coated with stucco and glaringly painted. Hence the original features of the images cannot be ascertained. In the basement of the shrine, above and below the rectangular moulding, which is found over the *kumuda*, small panels, each measuring 8 inches to 5 inches, are relieved with sculptures. They resemble the panels found on the basements of the Nāgēśvarasvāmi temple at Kumbakōṇam and Naltuṇai Īśvara temple at Puñjai, in their narrative function. 5 The upper strip has forty panels and the lower one nineteen. But most of them are completely worn out and obscured further by a thick coating of chunam wash. Among the better preserved sculptures are those depicting Durgā (Fig. 34), Vaṭapatraśāyi (Fig. 35), Laksmī seated on the lotus with an elephant on each side, Gajasamhāramūrti and Mahisāsuramardani. The Durgā is represented with eight

4. *Ibid.*

5. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cholas*, Figs. 92-4 ; 95-9. For a detailed description of the panels in the Nagesvarasvami Temple, see T. V. Mahalingam, " The Nagesvarasvami Temple," *JIH.*, XLV. pp. 62-73.

hands (Fig. 34), and the panel closely resembles a large panel found in the Varāha cave at Māmallapuram, with a devotee kneeling on her right side and offering his head as *bali*. The image of Vaṭapatraśāyi (Fig. 35) is also well depicted with the legs of the divine child well-stretched and his left hand brought near his face: the characteristic coiffure of Kṛṣṇa is also slightly visible. The leaf is represented with an oval outline.

Two other panels, though the figures in them are clearly visible, are difficult to identify. In one of them (Fig. 36) four figures are found, of which the one sculptured second from left, is found raising his right hand upwards, while his face is turned toward two female figures on the right and his right leg placed on a pedestal. Another short male figure is also found in the panel on the left side. The other unidentifiable scene (Fig. 37) presents a seated pair, the male figure found caressing the female. The latter is found in a very elegant posture and has a beautiful coiffure. Another figure, apparently an attendant, stands to the right of the pair, in a respectful attitude. The import of these scenes is not known. The panels representing Gajasamhāramūrti, Gajalaksmi and Mahisāsuramardani are identifiable only through the outlines, as they are badly worn out.

Though the composition of the scenes, especially in the Durgā panel (Fig. 34) is balanced they do not possess either the depth of similar sculptures found at Kumbakōṇam, or the movement expressed by those at Puñjai.

The Acalēśvara shrine preserves beautiful images in its niches, both icons and portraits. The west facing shrine, which was converted into stone structure during the latter half of the tenth century, naturally possesses the most refined products of the Cōḷa sculptor, who was at his best during that period. The north wall of the shrine presents in its niches the images of Ardhanārīśvara, Durgā, Kankāḷamūrti and Brahmā, besides two portraits found flanking the icon mentioned last. On the east wall, the image of Lingōdbhava and two portrait sculptures are housed in the niches. On the southern side, sculptures of Agastya and Gaṇēśa adorn the wall; two Naṭarāja images which were also housed in the niches of this wall, were completely mutilated, only their spreading locks of hair and the right foot are found. The present Daksiṇāmūrti image which is kept in worship in a small shrine, which abuts the niche appropriate to him,

is not the original one. Only one portrait is found on the south wall, in a niche to the proper left of the Daksiṇāmūrti shrine and the corresponding one on the right side is empty.

The image of Ardhanārīśvara represents a supreme iconographic concept suggestive of deep cosmic import and calls for the versatility in an artist who is compelled to exhibit his knowledge of the human torso, with its diametrically opposed variations (Fig. 38). The combined form represents the unity of Śiva and Śakti. The right male half stands resting the lower hand on the head of the *rsabha* behind and carries the axe in the upper hand. The characteristic *jaṭāmakuṭa* and other ornaments and the dress reaching down only to the middle of the thigh decorate the right half. Unfortunately the right leg is mutilated and found missing from about the knee. The female half has only one hand, which gracefully holds up a flower and the pleasing flexion at the left hip accentuates the beauty of the *tribhanga* pose, a notable feature in all such sculptures. The female half wears a *kirīṭa, svarnavaikaksaka,* elaborate girdle and a dress reaching down to the ankle.

The difference between the male and female contours has been effortlessly but successfully brought out. Though the male side is also depicted in graceful lines, the shoulders, arms and jaws are disposed in such a way as to effect softness on the left and firmness on the right. The images of Ardhanārīśvara may be represented with two, three or four arms.[6] A rare instance of an eight-armed Ardhanārīśvara is known from the late Cōḷa temple of Airāvatēśvara at Dārāsuram. However, early images are invariably represented with three arms only.

The Durgā image (Fig. 39) found in the next niche on the eastern side is an eight-armed figure holding respectively the *śankha* and *cakra* in the upper left and right hands, the *dhanus* and *bāṇa* in the next pair, *kheṭaka* and *khaḍga* in the next, the lower most pair in *kaṭyavalambita* and *abhaya.* A parrot is perched on the left hand at the wrist, an unusual feature to be associated with such images. The goddess is standing in the pleasing *tribhanga* pose on the head of a *mahisa,* with a slight flexion at the

6. T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *op. cit.*, vol. I, Pt. II, p. 324.

left hip. The figure wears a high *karaṇḍa makuṭa, makara kuṇḍalas, hāras, kucabandha* (breast-plate), *keyūras, svarṇavaikakṣaka* and rich *mekhaḷas.* The lower garment reaches down only to the middle of the thigh, while the elaborate loops of the *kaṭisūtra* fall elegantly on either side. An umbrella is represented above the figure.

With numerous attributes and minute ornamentation, the carving produces a pleasing rhythm, without resulting in any crowded effect.

Next comes Kankāḷamūrti, who is represented with four arms and found in *puris naturalibus.* The upper left hand holds the *kankāḷa daṇḍa* which rests on the left shoulder. The upper right holds what appears to be a *ḍamaru* and the lower right touches a rearing *mṛga* (deer). The lower left hand carries the *kapāla* meant for receiving alms. To the left of Kankāḷamūrti is the figure of a dwarf (*bhūta-gaṇa*) with folded hands and a humorous expression.

The figure wears the characteristic *jaṭāmakuṭa, patra kuṇḍala* and other ornaments including a *sarpa–yajñopavīta* and prominent *sarpa-mekhala.* There is a slight flexion at the left hip of the figure, a natural one due to the slow gait.

The next image is that of Brahmā, represented with four heads, of which three are visible, all wearing *kirīṭas.* The figure is adorned with usual neck ornaments, a *yajñopavīta* and a *udara bandha.* The upper two hands hold the usual attributes, viz., the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu*; the lower hands are in *abhaya* and *kaṭyavalambita.*

The central niche on the east wall of the shrine contains the image of Lingodbhava. The figure emerges out of the *linga* of flames which eluded the attempts of Brahmā and Viṣṇu to discover its beginning and end. As Lingodbhava, Śiva carries the *mṛga* and *paraśu* in the upper left and right hands respectively, while his lower left rests on the hip and the lower right which is broken must have been in *abhaya.* The figure stands in *samabhanga* and the feet are hidden below

The usual *jaṭāmakuṭa, kuṇḍalas, hāras* and other ornaments including a *udarabandha* adorn the image. The figures of a *hamsa* above and a *varāha* below represent respectively Brahmā and Viṣṇu searching for the limits of the pillar of fire. On either side of the

Lingōdbhava niche are found the actual representations of Brahmā and Visṇu with their characteristic features and attributes.

The Lingōdbhava concept which appears in sculptural form from the 8th century A. D. onwards, is invariably represented in the central niche on the back wall of the *sanctum sanctorum* in the Śiva temples in the Tamil country.

On the southern wall, the original Daksiṇāmūrti image is missing and a small, late image of the same *mūrti*, which is profusely ornamented, now occupies a small shrine appropriate to the image. The shrine abuts the southern wall, hiding the niche.

Further west of this attached shrine are found the images of Agastya and Gaṇeśa in adjoining niches. The figure of Agastya wears a top–knot and a *yajñopavīta.* He holds a pitcher in his right hand and has a protruding belly. The image of Gaṇeśa has an umbrella above, and the notable feature here is the absence of ornaments.

Portraits :

Five portraits are found in the niches of the Acalēśvara shrine, and of them four are in a good state of preservation. They are flanking the images of Brahmā on the north wall (Figs. 42 and 43) and Lingōdbhava on the west (Figs. 44 and 45). The image which is found to the left of Brahmā, has a youthful appearance (Fig. 42). It wears a high *jaṭāmakuṭa,* a lower garment reaching down to the ankle and choice ornaments. It seems to hold a flower in the right hand, while the left rests on the hip.

The other portrait (Fig. 43) that flanks Brahmā on the right seems to have almost a boyish countenance and wears a *jaṭāmakuṭa* which is not very high. It wears a *yajñopavīta* and a dress similar to the one worn by its counterpart on the left side of Brahmā. A slight smile is noticeable on its face and it thus stands in contrast to the humbly reverential and somewhat serious expression of the former. Its right hand rests on the hip. The object held in the left hand is not distinct.

The figure found to the right of Lingōdbhava (Fig. 44) is also youthful wearing a jewelled *kirīṭa, hārās, kēyūra, yajñōpavīta,* rich girdle and a lower garment down to the ankle. Its left hand holds a flower.

This portrait seems to depict a young person with a proud countenance, with his face held up.

The image to the left of Lingōdbhava closely resembles the former in dress and other details, but seems to represent a more aged person (Fig. 45). Again his attitude seems to be humbler. The portrait has broad shoulders.

Portrait sculptures are more numerous in the early Chōḷa period and are found in the early Chōḷa temples like the Nāgēśvara at Kumbakōṇam [7] and the Koraṅganātha at Śrīnivāsanallūr. The Acalēśvara portraits are somewhat inferior to those found in the above two temples, due to the lack of individuality and expression and it seems that installing portraits had become more a practice than a method to portray individuals. There is some truth in the observation that individuals are merged into a type in these portraits. [7a]

The sculptures adorning the basement of the eastern *gōpura* of the third *prākāra* mark the later phase of the Chōḷa sculpture. But as decorative motifs of a large basement, their curves and lines are dictated by the necessity of producing symmetry and harmony and hence lack the character of individual sculptures with a definite content. Two warriors, one mounted on a hybrid animal with the hind legs of a horse and the forepart and head of a lion, and the other standing below with upraised sword in the right hand and a shield in the left, strike a rigid pose (Fig. 46). The expression found on the face of the mounted warrior is almost wooden. The animal which is rearing up with the face and forepart flexed to the right, is also schematically represented. This motif seems to be a favourite one with the sculptors of the 13th–14th centuries, with which they decorated different parts of the *gōpura*.

Almost a similar group is found on the same basement of the same *gōpura* (Fig. 47). But here the group faces left. Two warriors are found,

7. T. V. Mahalingam, "The Nagesvarasvami Temple", *JIH*, XLV, pp 45 ff.

7 a. S. R. Krishnamurthi, *A study on the cultural developments in the Chola period*, p. 36.

one riding on the rearing animal and the other below it. The pilasters flanking the sculpture are carried by *vyālas*, with stylised manes and terrific countenances. The *vyāla* of the corner pilaster is seen fully with an upturned curled tail.

A similar motif is found placed in a plain niche in the same basement (Fig. 48). But in the place of the lion's head is found a human head with a big moustache, wearing a *karaṇḍa makuṭa* and *kuṇḍalas*. The manes of a lion are shown below the neck and the upturned and curled tail is seen behind. Only one warrior is shown here as standing under this man-lion motif.

In another sculpture found on the basement of the east *gōpura*, Durgā fighting Mahisāsura, is depicted through an unusual composition (Fig. 49). She is shown in a rare form, riding on a rampant lion, which is quite out of proportion by its huge size in comparison with the figure of the goddess herself. The figure of the goddess is endowed with eight hands carrying different weapons. While the form of the goddess partakes the slenderness of the early Chōḷa sculptures, the treatment of the dress and ornaments confirms the later phase to which the sculpture belongs. The figure of Mahisāsura below the rampant lion is the usual hybrid form. combining the face of a *mahisa* and the body of a human being carrying the *gadā* in his right hand and aiming to strike at the advancing divine fighter.

On the basement of the eastern *gōpura* of the third *prākāra*, some pilasters are found with danseuses placed on their capitals. These figures are remarkable for their grace and suppleness of form. They are detachable round images. One of them (Fig. 51) stands in the *valitam* [8] pose but the *mudrās* of the hands are lost as both hands are broken. The danseuse wears an elaborate coiffure with the hair in front falling in ringlets above the forehead. Not covered by any clothing on the upper part, she wears a lower garment which reaches down to the ankle and is shown with parallel ridge like carving on the legs and folds between the legs. The lower garment is held by a rich girdle and the

8. B. V. Narayanaswami Naidu, *Tandava Laksanam*, p. 131-18.

loops of the dress fall elegantly on either side. The frieze of the grotesque *bhūta gaṇas* running round the entire base of the structure affords a striking background in contrast with the graceful figure of the danseuse.

A more intricate *karaṇa* called the *lalāṭa lilaka*[9] is depicted in another sculpture of a danseuse similar to the one above (Fig. 52). The figure wears an elaborate coiffure and rich ornaments but the lower garment covers only down to the thighs, the edges of the cloth being visible above the knees.

Another figure of a danseuse is represented in the *karaṇa* called *ghūrnitam.*[10] (Fig. 50) In all respects this figure resembles the one found in the *valitam pose.*

In the expression of sheer physical energy and a thorough discipline which forms its basis, the sculpture is a masterpiece. For suppleness of form that is expressed in slender but sturdy frames, and grace of movement, these figures are excellent specimens and there may be only a few sculptures of the same period from any place in the Tamil country to parallel them.

The entry way pilasters of the western *gōpura* of the third *prākāra*, are relieved with panels of sculptures (Fig. 53). Sculptural puns are found in some of these small panels. One of them (Fig. 54) combines three figures the central one that of a dancer, the right one that of a *mṛdanga* player and the one found on the left probably of another musician. All the three are on four legs, the two central legs forming the pair belonging to the female dancer in *catura* pose. The other two figures appear to turn away from the centre as the two legs of the dancer determine the postures of the other two figures also. The dancing figure is adorned by an elaborate coiffure and ornaments while the two musicians wear huge top-knots. The side of the small square panel into which all the three are grouped measures approximately 1 foot.

Another interesting sculptural pun is a female figure with two pairs of legs, a single head and torso, and a single pair of arms (Fig. 56). The

9. *Ibid.*, p. 129-5.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 132-19.

figure faces front and the two pairs of legs are turned side-ways, one leg in each pair resting on one knee, the other being lifted up. An elaborate halo is found behind the head. Below this figure, another panel is found to depict a dancer, striking a pose in *Bharatanāṭya*.

Another panel contains a sculptural pun, in which a complex dancing figure with two forms, one male and the other a female on a single pair of legs, execute an intricate movement, that of the female being particularly interesting as the whole body appears to curve towards the proper left like an arch. (Fig. 55). These panels are usually shallow with the figure groups executed in low relief. Above this panel is the figure of Śiva as Gajasamhāramūrti with eight arms carrying various weapons ; and the figure of an elephant is found below, against which the left leg of the god is lifted. The *samhāra* aspects of Śiva are invariably shown in *tāṇḍava* poses and in this instance the divine dancer takes his place along with other dancing sculptures on the pilaster of the entry way of the western *gōpura*.

Sculptural puns like the above are often met with in the small square or rectangular panels of the late Chōḷa temple at Dārāśuram. There the panels are found on the base of the cloistered *verandah* running round the main temple-complex in the inner courtyard. It is significant that such puns invariably depict different dancing postures probably as combinations of different movements executed during a dance performance.

Bronzes :

The Tiruvārūr temple sadly lacks a good collection of ancient bronzes. Of the numerous bronzes kept in the cloistered verandah of the first *prākāra*, including the images of the sixty-three nāyanārs, all are assignable to a period later than the 14th century, with a single exception.

The main deity inside the Tyāgarāja shrine, as already observed, is a Somāskanda figure, of whieh only the faces of the god and goddess are seen. But what is seen is sufficient to determine the early date of the figures, which radiate remarkable spiritual energy through the divine smile effectively frozen in their faces (Fig. 1).

By the side of the Caṇḍikēśvara shrine a bronze Caṇḍikēśvara is preserved in a separate shrine. Its hands folded in *añjali* posture and devoid of ornaments, the image is a study in humility. It wears a cylindrical *makuṭa*. The bronze may assigned to the early Chōḷa period.

An image of Bhiksāṭana (Fig. 57), kept in the cloistered *verandah* of the first *prākāra*, west of the Vanmīkanātha shrine is interesting. The facial features, the treatment of the torso and the abdomen, points to a late period. Yet, the figure is not wanting in grace and elegance as the *tribhanga* pose of the divine "beggar" who, unfettered by any clothing, proceeds to the Dārukāvana to beg in atonement for the sin of having cut off one of the heads of Brahmā.

There is hardly any trace of humility in the upward tilt of the head and the gait of the figure. The iconographic features are in conformity with the textual prescriptions and the snake which entwines the right thigh of Śiva adds a decorative element. The figure itself has the usual ornament with the exception of the *kaṭisūtra* (its absence here is due to the lack of any clothing). An additional ornament just below the right knee is a notable feature. The upper right hand carries the *ḍamaru* and the lower left the begging bowl. The figure of a dwarf which usually accompanies the god is not found here.

Paintings :

The paintings in the temple seem to be confined to the ceiling of the *Dēvāśriyan maṇḍapa* or perhaps only there the paintings have survived. On the ceiling of this *maṇḍapa* the exploits of the mythical Chōḷa king Mucukunda are depicted in painted scenes, each scene duly labelled in painted scripts.

Beginning from the western end of the *maṇḍapa*, the scenes *seriatim* represent Tyāgarāja on the chest of the reclining Visṇu, Indra in his court, Indra fighting the Asuras, Visṇu giving the image of Tyāgarāja to Indra, Mucukunda fighting the Asuras, the victorious Mucukunda taken to the palace of Indra on the white elephant (Fig. 58), Tyāgarāja appearing in Mucukunda's dream, Mucukunda pointing out the original image of Tyāgarāja among six identical images and the installation of Tyāgarāja at Tiruvārūr by Mucukunda.

The figure of Mucukunda is represented with the face of a monkey riding on an elephant, the *howdah* of which is shown like a *maṇḍapa* with a canopy above. The *maṇḍapa* is disproportionately large in size and two attendants standing on either side, one of them waving a *cāmara* are seen in it.

The paintings belong to the late phase of Vijayanagar art. They are all executed in horizontal friezes like all Vijayanagar paintings, elsewhere such as Lepākṣi, Hampi, Tirupparuttikkuṉṟam[11] and Tirumalai. In fact the figure of Mucukunda found in the Lepākṣi paintings closely resembles the figure of Mucukunda found in the Tiruvārūr paintings.[12]

The figures are schematically arranged and conventionally treated. The third dimension is entirely absent in these figures, the burden of expressing volume and mass falling on the line alone. The features are exaggerated and the forms are stereotyped. Yet, minute attention to details like ornaments and weapons is an appreciable factor here. However, as a means of instructing the devotees in the stories and legends relating to the temple, these paintings have immeasurable value and during the 14th–17th centuries, this method was adopted in the numerous temples of the South in order to preserve the stories regarding the temples and also to decorate the temple precints with purāṇic and epic themes in painting.

In the *gōpura* of the first *prākāra*, right of entrance on the vestibule wall there is a pointed portrait of Sarfoji, the Mahrāṭṭa ruler of Tañjāvūr. It is found in a remarkable state of preservation. In every detail the carefully executed portrait resembles the one now preserved at the Tañjāvūr palace.

In the history of paintings in South India, Tiruvārūr has a definite place, though the paintings in the temple have not received the attention they deserve. Both with regard to their subject matter and method of treatment they represent the last phase of Vijayanagar paintings.

11. T. N. Ramachandran, *Tiruparuttikkunram and its Temples*, pls. VI & VII.

12. C. Sivaramamurti, "Vijayanagara Paintings from the Temple at Lepakshi", *Vijayanagara Sex centenary Commemoration Volume*, p. 85.

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Malaipaḍukaḍām

Periyapurāṇam

Rājarājaśōḷanulā

Śilappadikāram

Tēvāram[1] -- Appar
Ñānasambandar
Sundaramūrti

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1. The numbers referring to the Tevaram hymns denote *seriatim*, *Tirumurai : Padigam : Verse.*

Tirumandiram
Tiruvārūrkkōvai
Tiruvārūr Purāṇam
Tiruvārūr Mummaṇikkōvai
Tiruvāśagam
Tiruviḷaiyāḍaṛ–purāṇam

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